SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00331 6453

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00331 6453

BOOK NO. 759.2 ZC67 | ACCESSION 70994

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
VITA SINE LITERIS MORS EST

FORM 3431 20M 9-42

Pages missing
Illustrations

DUE DATE

SFPL NOV 20 '88
SFPL OCT 24 '89 '91
SFPL APR
SFPL APR - 5 '91
AUG 10 1997

201-6503

Printed in USA

THE HONORABLE MRS. GRAHAM, BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH.

OLD ENGLISH MASTERS

ENGRAVED BY TIMOTHY COLE

WITH HISTORICAL NOTES BY

JOHN C. VAN DYKE

AND COMMENTS BY THE ENGRAVER

London
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
1902

759.2
Z67

Copyright, 1896, 1897, 1898,
1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, by
THE CENTURY CO.

Published October, 1902

70994

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES BY THE DE VINNE PRESS.

00331-6453

PREFACE

IT is now many years since Timothy Cole began his series of wood-engravings after the old masters of painting. His first essay was in the field of Italian art. After engraving nearly seventy of the great Italian pictures, he turned his attention to the Dutchmen and Flemings at Amsterdam and Antwerp. How successfully he translated the art of the Netherlands is shown in the thirty engravings after Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyck, and others, which make up the second volume of the series. When he had finished with the Dutchmen, Mr. Cole crossed the Channel to undertake the eighteenth-century painters of England. Since 1894 he has been constantly engaged in cutting blocks after the famous portraits of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, and others and the landscapes of Turner, Constable, and their contemporaries. The present volume contains some forty-eight examples of his work, and represents the more prominent of the older painters of Great Britain, from Hogarth to Landseer.

The series, in which this is the third volume, cannot be regarded as other than monumental. No such translation of old pictures has ever been attempted heretofore; and it is safe to say that no similar translation will ever be attempted hereafter. It is doubtful if there is a living engraver on wood, save Mr. Cole, equal to the task. The value of his work—the value of wood-engraving itself—is in no way lessened by the existence of photographic processes of reproduction. That the public is willing to accept a photograph, or that it puts up with the infirmities of the half-tone, is no argument against the wood-engraving. There has yet to be de-

vised a mechanical process that will render the exact values of tones like the lines of the graver—the pure black beside the pure white. The subtile colors of a robe under light and shade, the mysterious quality of a half-light, are things that no lens will determine so accurately as the human eye. The process blurs and slurs them where the engraving reveals them. Moreover, the excellencies that lie in the photograph the engraver already possesses. His picture is always photographed upon the block, and it is upon this block-photograph that he works. Indeed, it is no inconsiderable part of his craft nowadays to amend the faults of the photograph—to add where it omits, and to modify where it distorts. With Mr. Cole it may be said that while he uses the photograph he does not accept it as final by any means. In each and every case he has worked with the original picture before him—the ultimate appeal, in any questionable case, being made to the original. So it would seem that on the score of truth alone the engraving is not to be put down in favor of any mechanism yet known to the arts.

But linear truth or tonal truth is not the only aim of wood-engraving. The engraver is an individuality, not a machine; and if he have the artistic sense he may be a translator, an interpreter, of a painter's sensitiveness or mood or feeling. A way of looking at things and a method of working may bring the life and spirit of the original before one with great vividness. The "Parson's Daughter," by Romney, for instance, is a picture of much grace, loveliness, and girlish charm. Turn to Mr. Cole's engraving of it in this volume, and see how cleverly he has rendered these qualities by the subtile, flowing lines of the graver. Follow the minute lines that wave across the face and hair and melt into the background, and, aside from their rendering of delicate color-notes, what a sense of rhythm and melody those lines reveal! And for another example of a different character, turn to the engraving of "Lord Newton," by Raeburn, and see how well the ponderous bulk and insistent force of the sitter have been suggested by the square and broken lines across the face and the free open lines across the robe. It is in just such qualities as these that the engraver rises above the

copyist and becomes himself an artist. And surely it is not too much to claim the artist in Mr. Cole. The engravings in this volume alone should give it proof.

In the selection of painters for representation, the title "Old English Masters" was thought to be broad enough to include a Scotchman like Raeburn, who was English in his art, and narrow enough to shut out an Englishman like Bonington, who was French in his art. The endeavor was to pick the best men of the best period—the period from about 1750 to 1850. The painters who flourished in that blossoming-time of English art were primarily painters of the portrait, the landscape, and the genre piece. The pictures which Mr. Cole has engraved represent them in these subjects. In every case the example chosen shows the painter at his best or is designed to show him in a different style or certain period of his career. The private houses of England and Scotland were specially invaded to secure many of these pictures, and in this connection acknowledgment should be made of the great courtesy and kindness shown by the owners of the pictures in placing them at the service of the engraver. It is proper also at this time to thank, for good counsel in the matter of selecting the painters and their pictures, Mr. Sidney Colvin, Sir Edward J. Poynter, Mr. Lionel Cust, Mr. Holmes of Windsor, Mr. Strong of Chatsworth, Mr. Reeve of Norwich, Mr. Charles Fairfax Murray, Mr. Martin Colnaghi, Mr. Pennell, and Mr. Whistler.

The text that accompanies the engravings is designed to recite not only the life of the individual painter, but to suggest the time and the circumstance of this eighteenth-century art. Mr. Cole's comments on the pictures, which he has so carefully studied in the process of engraving, have a special interest of their own, and will be appreciated by art-lovers as well as by artists.

JOHN C. VAN DYKE.

RUTGERS COLLEGE, 1901.

CONTENTS

PAGE

OLD ENGLISH MASTERS: A NOTE ON ENGLISH ART . . . 1

CHAPTER I

WILLIAM HOGARTH 13

CHAPTER II

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS 31

CHAPTER III

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH 49

CHAPTER IV

RICHARD WILSON 67

CHAPTER V

GEORGE ROMNEY 77

CHAPTER VI

JOHN HOPPNER 91

CHAPTER VII

SIR WILLIAM BEECHEY 101

CHAPTER VIII

PAGE

Sir Henry Raeburn 109

CHAPTER IX

John Opie 121

CHAPTER X

George Morland 129

CHAPTER XI

John Crome 139

CHAPTER XII

John Sell Cotman 149

CHAPTER XIII

Sir Thomas Lawrence 159

CHAPTER XIV

Joseph Mallord William Turner 173

CHAPTER XV

John Constable 189

CHAPTER XVI

Sir David Wilkie 201

CHAPTER XVII

Charles Robert Leslie 211

CHAPTER XVIII

Sir Edwin Henry Landseer 217

INDEX OF ILLUSTRATIONS

GAINSBOROUGH, THE HONORABLE MRS. GRAHAM . . . . Frontispiece
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

FACING PAGE

HOGARTH, MARRIAGE À LA MODE (Detail) 16
National Gallery, London

HOGARTH, PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF 21
National Portrait Gallery, London

HOGARTH, GARRICK AND HIS WIFE 24
Windsor Castle

HOGARTH, THE SHRIMP GIRL (A Sketch) 28
National Gallery, London

REYNOLDS, GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE 33
Collection of Earl Spencer, Althorp

REYNOLDS, PORTRAIT OF LORD HEATHFIELD 36
National Gallery, London

REYNOLDS, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE AND CHILD 40
Collection of Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth

REYNOLDS, LADY COCKBURN AND FAMILY 45
National Gallery, London

GAINSBOROUGH, THE SISTERS — MRS. SHERIDAN AND MRS. TICKELL 53
Dulwich Gallery

GAINSBOROUGH, PORTRAIT OF MRS. SIDDONS 60
National Gallery, London

GAINSBOROUGH, THE WATERING PLACE 65
National Gallery, London

WILSON, CICERO'S VILLA 71
Owned by Thomas Agnew & Sons, London

FACING PAGE

WILSON, ON THE RIVER WYE 74
National Gallery, London

ROMNEY, PORTRAIT OF MRS. DAVIES 80
Collection of Edgar Speyer, Esq., London

ROMNEY, LADY DERBY 83
Collection of Sir Charles Tennant, London

ROMNEY, THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER 84
National Gallery, London

HOPPNER, THE RIGHT HONORABLE WILLIAM PITT 93
Collection of Lord Rosebery, London

HOPPNER, PRINCESS SOPHIA, DAUGHTER OF GEORGE III 94
Windsor Castle

HOPPNER, THE COUNTESS OF OXFORD 98
National Gallery, London

BEECHEY, BROTHER AND SISTER 104
Louvre, Paris

RAEBURN, MRS. R. SCOTT MONCRIEFF 111
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

RAEBURN, PORTRAIT OF LORD NEWTON 115
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

RAEBURN, PORTRAIT OF A LADY 118
National Gallery, London

OPIE, PORTRAIT OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT 126
National Gallery, London

MORLAND, THE HALT 132
Louvre, Paris

MORLAND, STABLE INTERIOR 136
National Gallery, London

CROME, THE WINDMILL 141
National Gallery, London

CROME, MOUSEHOLD HEATH 144
National Gallery, London

FACING PAGE

COTMAN, THE BREAKDOWN 151
Collection of the late J. J. Colman, Esq., Norwich

COTMAN, FISHING-BOATS OFF YARMOUTH 154
Collection of the late J. J. Colman, Esq., Norwich

LAWRENCE, PORTRAIT OF MRS. SIDDONS 161
National Gallery, London

LAWRENCE, THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON 162
Collection of Lord Rosebery, London

LAWRENCE, THE SISTERS 167
Collection of Charles Crews, Esq., London

LAWRENCE, LADY DERBY (Miss Farren) 170
Collection of Lord de Grey Wilton

TURNER, ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS 175
National Gallery, London

TURNER, THE "FIGHTING TÉMÉRAIRE" 178
National Gallery, London

TURNER, A FROSTY MORNING 183
National Gallery, London

TURNER, DIDO BUILDING CARTHAGE 186
National Gallery, London

CONSTABLE, THE HAY WAIN 191
National Gallery, London

CONSTABLE, WATERLOO BRIDGE (A Sketch) 193
Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy, London

CONSTABLE, HAMPSTEAD HEATH 196
South Kensington Museum

CONSTABLE, THE CORN-FIELD 198
National Gallery, London

WILKIE, THE REFUSAL 205
South Kensington Museum, London

WILKIE, DIGGING FOR RATS 208
Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy, London

FACING PAGE

LESLIE, CATHARINE OF ARAGON AND MAID 214
Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy, London

LANDSEER, PORTRAIT OF DR. JOHN ALLEN 219
National Portrait Gallery, London

LANDSEER, THE SHEPHERD'S CHIEF MOURNER 222
South Kensington Museum, London

OLD ENGLISH MASTERS

OLD ENGLISH MASTERS

A NOTE ON ENGLISH ART

I

IN one of the hospital buildings at Greenwich there is a large room known and spoken of, even at the present time, as the "Painted Hall." The name strikes the fancy as very odd, and excites a momentary wonder as to what it can mean—what a "painted hall" can be. It seems hardly possible that the name is merely a provincial way of describing a room with decorated walls, and yet there is no other explanation. That is the meaning intended to be conveyed. Years ago Sir James Thornhill painted here a central oval with two end pieces in color and some side decorations in black and white. And it seems that this painting of pictures for walls and ceilings was such an extraordinary performance in Thornhill's England that the painter was knighted, and the room itself wonderingly named the "Painted Hall"—as one should say: "There are plenty of halls in England, but only this one is painted."

Imagine any one in Rome speaking of the Sistine as the "Painted Chapel"! How indefinite, how very meaningless it would sound! For all chapels in Italy are more or less painted. In fact, Italian painting was born in a chapel, and in its earlier years it did little more than cover chapel walls with Bible story. The church had use for it as a teacher of the faith—an illustrator of the Word. Old and New Testament were spread out in fresco, that all might see—that those who ran might read. It was a poor church indeed that had not some of its chapels painted; and it was a poorer

congregation that had not some pictorial cast of mind, some appreciation of beauty in form and color. For these church frescos, while primarily for instruction, were also designed to decorate and ornament the walls upon which they were placed. In those days architecture was the mother of the arts, and painting was only one of her handmaidens. Where architecture left bare walls, apses, and ceilings, it was the affair of painting to come after and fill those spaces with forms and colors. At first the painter did his work awkwardly, laboriously, minutely. He came not at once full-fledged to maturity. Many years — yes, whole centuries — passed in experiment, in abortive trial, before he was able to work easily and gracefully. But finally, in Renaissance times, he became an expert at filling given spaces; he became commanding in his composition, and, at Venice, supremely masterful in his grasp of color. The great artist, the creator of monumental art, had at last arrived. Many causes had combined to produce him — the church, the gilds, the pictorial mind of Italy, the Renaissance. Many things had combined to make his art excellent — sound teaching, perfect craftsmanship, breadth of view, sincerity of purpose. And not the least of advantages for both art and artist, this painting was produced in the full glare of publicity, spread in public places, and subject to public criticism.

How very different the art history of England! The church was not all-powerful there, and did not use painting as a means of instruction in the Word. When Catholicism was upon the throne there were few English painters; when Protestantism came to power there were painters enough, but the reformed faith did not care for their services. There were no gilds to regulate the painter's art, no public paintings to be done upon church walls, no filling of architectural spaces with form and color. Consequently there was no church art, no monumental painting. The English painters never understood the large composition, and never became proficient in handling it. It is true the eighteenth-century painters aspired to it in the so-called "historical canvas"; but again and again, in the hands of men like Reynolds and Lawrence, the aspiration proved to be the unsubstantial fabric of a dream. It had no foundation — no elementary construction. The English were no more fitted to paint in what they called "the grand style" than the Dutch across the water. Neither of them had sufficient training for the task. This in itself was sufficient to place a limi-

tation upon English painting. And yet the limitation was not perhaps to the ultimate disadvantage of English art. For it threw the painters back upon their native resources, and resulted in the production of a different kind of painting—a kind in keeping with the age and people, and certainly more spontaneous than any labored imitation of Italy.

II

The absence of the large wall-painting in England, as in the Netherlands, has been charged up to climate, to the unsuitableness of the fresco to damp countries, to the absence of the religious motive, to insularity, to provincialism; but it may as well be said at once that in these countries there were no pictures in public places because painting was not a public affair. To this day the English picture is the easel picture, the auction-room commodity in a gold frame that passes from one owner to another, and the public little the wiser or the better for the transfer. It is an article of barter, a bauble for the collector's drawing-room, or at best an unrelated square of form and color holding place on the line at some loan exhibition in which only the restricted few take any interest. It was just so in the eighteenth century. Pictures were a luxury enjoyed by the king, the nobles, and the well-to-do. The artist and his art journeyed to the court and had little to say to the masses. That engravings of celebrated pictures were made and given out to the public at so many guineas apiece, that there was a Royal Academy with doors that opened in season, and that there were exhibitions of pictures from year to year, speaks little for the publicity of art. It would require a great many exhibitions of the Royal Academy to bring art home to London as the church of Santa Maria Novella once brought it home to Florence.

Not that the English people were indifferent to art, but that in matters artistic they were little consulted or considered. The private citizen—the collector—paid for the picture, not the public, and it was his taste that predominated from the start. In a way, true enough, his taste was English taste, and the artists who produced were English artists, so that, after all, the English view is represented; but all that suggests nationality in art rather than the publicity of art in the nation. For art, to be of a public character, must have something of general interest for subject, and something of conspicuous exposure for appreciation; whereas this English art

had little of either. It was private furniture, admired chiefly by a select circle of the initiated.

Naturally, with the individual as purchaser, the portrait became the demand of the age. People in the world of fashion were loath to suffer a change and leave no likeness of themselves to future times. King and courtier, men of rank and women of beauty, and children with splendid promise in their eyes, all were put upon canvas. And this, too, with nobility of pose and some loftiness of mood which, even though slightly strained, was not at all bad in taste nor inacceptable as formula. The portraits that Van Dyck had left scattered through the houses of England made up the tradition from which this English portraiture derived. Gainsborough, Romney, Hoppner, all harked back to the noble painter of nobility. They accepted his princely pose of the sitter, his selection of only the best qualities, his enhancement of effect by baronial column and curtain, his richness of robe and glamour of color. Foreign travel frequently modified this influence. Reynolds in Holland had his day of worshiping Rembrandt, and Wilkie fell under the spell of Velasquez at Madrid. Every painter who goes traveling is liable to have moments of bowing before foreign gods. And yet, with all the Van Dyck tradition, with all the force of foreign example, there is not one of the famous English portraits that looks like a foreign picture. The tang of the English soil is about them. They have not only individuality, but nationality.

The landscape was evidently something the painters did for their own pleasure. It was not in demand, and no one cared to buy it except as an act of charity to the painter. Gainsborough left a studio full of Suffolk woodlands, and the golden skies of Wilson failed to keep the wolf from his door. It was unappreciated art on the easels of Crome, Cotman, and Constable; and even Turner's popular success may be traced, not to his English skies and waters, but to his grandiloquence of subject. And the landscape, too, was influenced in its beginnings by foreign example. The tradition of Claude and the historical picture held with one group of painters, the realism of Ruysdael and the Dutchmen with another group of painters. Yet the landscape was, taking it for all in all, more peculiarly English than the portrait. It spoke the painter's love for the quiet woodlands and meadows, with their cattle; for the gently flowing rivers, with their locks; for the rounded hills, with their windmills; for the harbors, with their sails. It was the

England that they loved best, and most feelingly did men like Crome and Constable portray it. But in those Georgian days rural subjects were voted somewhat vulgar, and cattle and horses were not supposed to hold place upon canvas. The only landscape the "connoisseurs" cared much for was the Arcadia of Claude, with its Corinthian temples, and peopled harbors, and yellow sun sinking into the sea. Beside such a theatrical concoction the woods of Suffolk and the waves of Yarmouth were too provincial.

The languid interest taken in the landscape was a trifle stimulated when the painters added to their pictures figures of country children, as Gainsborough, or tavern groups, as Morland. This made a compromise picture usually known in the dealers' catalogues as "Landscape with Figures." Perhaps the English painters borrowed the idea from the Dutch, and perhaps it was quite original with them; but certainly it was not very popular with picture buyers. Again, it was too rural, too natural, too purely pictorial. Humble life in the country was deadly dull to the Dr. Johnsons in the city. There was nothing beautiful about cottage doors and ragged children and post-horses. Besides, they meant nothing in the sense of telling a story or illustrating poetry or fiction. When Morland told the sentimental tale of some unfortunate heroine of fiction, the canvas was bought up before the paint upon it was dry.

The picture with an incident—the small canvas with its interest hinging upon some anecdote—was perhaps the most popular picture of all. It has usually been assumed that only the English love the episodic panel, but the truth is, the masses in any country take kindly to it. It has something human about it—something that all can understand. The fine pictorial qualities of Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode," or Wilkie's "Blind Fiddler," or Landseer's "Shepherd's Chief Mourner" are likely to go a-begging for a word of praise from the average person; but not so with the subjects and the stories they tell. Those who are not interested in art as decoration are quick enough in comprehending art as narration. Of course the anecdotal picture was plentiful in English art because popular. All the artists affected it somewhat, and even when the palette and canvas were set for the "historical painting," the episode was in evidence, as witness the many pictures painted from scenes in Shakspere or Plutarch. It was the only original figure-painting known to English art, and corresponded after its kind to the genre of Steen and Ostade over in Holland.

III

It has been said—anent the incident picture—that the cast of the English mind has always been more literary than pictorial; that it conceives art, as an illustration rather than a creation—a something that helps out history and the gospels rather than a complete entity in itself. There is something in the statement. Many of the English pictures were painted almost solely for the purpose of engraving and the circulation of the episode in black and white; some of them were painted from the stage and illustrate the acts of a play; some of them are colored scenes from novels and border ballads—things designed to point a moral or adorn a tale. Beyond doubt England shows its literary bias in its art. For literature was as native to the kingdom as art was foreign. The poet dates from the earliest reigns, and the appeal to the ear by language has always been the chief avenue of approach to the English understanding. The appeal to the senses—the approach to the eye with a revelation of form or color—is something that could perhaps be more successfully undertaken with the Latin races. It requires a more susceptible, more impressionable, more emotional make-up than that of the Anglo-Saxon to receive art merely for its decorative value.

Yet the generalization should not be pushed too far or too hard. It will not do to conclude that because the English are thinkers, liking common sense and good literature, that therefore they are not observers. Indeed, Sir Joshua and his contemporaries were very shrewd observers. As portrait-painters there was little in their sitters they did not see and record. How much they revealed of the graceful, the charming, the lovely in women and children that had never been noticed before! How much of character they portrayed in the faces of the Keppels, the Pitts, and the Goldsmiths! The landscape-painters were not behind them in original observation. What painter of landscape can match Crome in grasp of light, sky, and aërial space? Claude was crude and Corot limited compared with him. And who so penetrated the mystery of driving clouds and rain and sunbursts as Constable? Rousseau and Daubigny, with their majestic skies, came after Constable, not before him. No; the pictorial sense is large enough with these eighteenth-century painters of England. They see truly

and artistically, and because they see differently from other painters is not to say that they see erroneously.

And again a generalization from the English inability to handle the large canvas like the Renaissance Italians is not to be insisted upon too arbitrarily. Certainly the lack of academic training was a shortcoming that one often feels disagreeably prominent in the pictures. That Romney never learned craftsmanship in the gilds, that he never served time on wall and ceiling, that he never was a pupil to a capable master, is apparent enough in his classical endeavors. The line halts and stumbles; the picture does not hold together; the brush-stroke is quick, feverish, but uncertain. His fellows differed from him only in degree. They have not the facility of an Andrea del Sarto. They are not craftsmen in the Italian sense; and when they try to work in the Italian manner they are out of their element, beyond their depth.

But eighteenth-century England never asked its painters to do Andrea del Sarto's frescos. It never suggested that they should paint Crucifixions and Last Suppers and Ariadnes. The painting of such things in England was mere pictorial pedantry designed to show that one had been abroad and could produce great art if he would. Not the picture of the Madonna, but the portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire, perhaps; not an allegory of Venice enthroned in splendor, but a reality of English life — these were the requirements of the age. And so, when working within their proper sphere and upon the materials placed before them, the English painters produced, not an imitation of Continental art, but English art. And it must be conceded that they produced it with much insight and skill. If they could not draw with the classic line, they were not the less clever with the naturalistic line. If they were unable to model a face with the light and shade of a Leonardo, they could paint it with patches of color in a very convincing style. With a technique largely of their own invention, they brought the Georgian life of England to canvas in no uncertain manner. And that is precisely what they should have done. True art always pictures its own time and its own people in its own way.

IV

Before the eighteenth century there was little native art in England worthy of the name. In the early days the painter was

only a clever mechanic in the service of the king, doing gilding, ironwork, carpentry, tailoring—all sorts of odd jobs requiring skill of hand. When the Reformation came it destroyed what art, foreign and otherwise, had been accumulated in the land. Modern painting was born in Italy, and Protestantism opposed everything Italian as savoring of popery. Portraiture seems to have survived the general wreck through human vanity; and under Henry VIII it was carried on at court with considerable vigor. Holbein, the first eminent artist in English court annals, came over with the Duke of Arundel in 1526, and painted the king and many of the nobility. There were no English portrait-painters of note at this time, and each sovereign had to import a painter from the Continent. Under Mary came Antonÿ Moro; and under Elizabeth, who, it is said, fancied her likeness somewhat idealized, came the fulsome D'Heere. But toward the close of the Elizabethan reign there appeared two English miniature-painters of talent — Hilliard and Oliver. They were early men, — the primitives of English art, — but not without considerable skill. After them the line of English portraiture was carried, by men like Cooper, Dobson, Walker, and others, down to Hogarth and Reynolds, with few breaks in the succession. That it attracted small attention until the time of Reynolds is not surprising. It was not mature art, and compared with the work of the foreigners — an unavoidable comparison — it was insignificant.

When Charles I came to the throne he had Inigo Jones for architect and Van Dyck for painter; and art, which had rather languished under James, now came into court prominence once more. Charles began the collecting and housing of pictures, and had in this the assistance of Rubens and other painters. His nobles followed his example to some extent, the Duke of Buckingham, for instance, buying the whole private collection of Rubens in one lot. There was, all told, much activity in the realm of art just at this time. For Rubens was at one time decorating the banqueting-room of Whitehall, and later Van Dyck was, for a long time, throwing off portraits of grand people from his easel that must have attracted no little attention in English high life. But when Cromwell and the Puritans came they changed all that. The reign of the king ended abruptly, and after his death the twelve hundred pictures he had collected were dispersed. Art was forced down and out. As Walpole tersely remarks, it was "expelled with the royal family."

The Restoration brought back a regal viciousness and ostentation which were strikingly reflected in the portraits of the new court painter, Sir Peter Lely. He was a very good painter — a man of accomplishments; but, like a seventeenth-century Italian, he was lacking in originality, and was overcrowded with mannerisms and affectations. The example he set was pernicious; and the vain Sir Godfrey Kneller, who came after him, did not mend matters. His art was just a little worse than Lely's, being, if anything, a trifle more mannered. So the beginning of the eighteenth century found painting in England at a low ebb. The great foreigners had passed on; the great English painters had not yet arrived. There was a gap in art history, with only Thornhill and his pseudo-Italian decorations to fill it. Yet just at this time, almost as the dawn following the darkness, came William Hogarth, who at once gave importance to native painting, and definitely placed it upon its feet. He has been called the founder of the school. It might be more exact if he were called the first man of genius to appear in English art.

WILLIAM HOGARTH

CHAPTER I

WILLIAM HOGARTH

(1697–1764)

GEORGE I had gone to the shades and George II was on the throne when the art of Hogarth first began to be talked about in London town. It was something out of the ordinary that an English painter should make a stir in art circles. For time out of mind it had been thought that the dampness of the climate or natural incapacity prevented the native from doing good work, and that none but a Continental could be an artist in the grand style. So long had the *outre mer* contingent been at court, so long had the foreign cult been established, that no one thought of taking the home product seriously. Even when Hogarth made his appearance he was not considered a rival of the foreigners by any one but himself. He did not win public attention by painting the historical picture better than Rubens. Such large pictures as he painted were coldly received; and Sir Joshua, who voiced British taste in his day, did not regard Hogarth as an artist of the higher sort. Neither did he draw notice to himself by painting nobility nobler than Van Dyck. His portraits were excellent, but the people of his time did not think so. He attracted attention by a new kind of painting—a something like personal journalism with the paint-brush—that hit and interested all classes. He created a pictorial "Dunciad," and set the people of the town by the ears with his lampoons on the follies of the times. This made a talk, and London awoke to the fact that there was one English painter who at least had something to say. There was much attention given to what he said, for his truths struck near home; but one fails to find in his own time, or even in the present time, any wide-spread appreciation of how he said it.

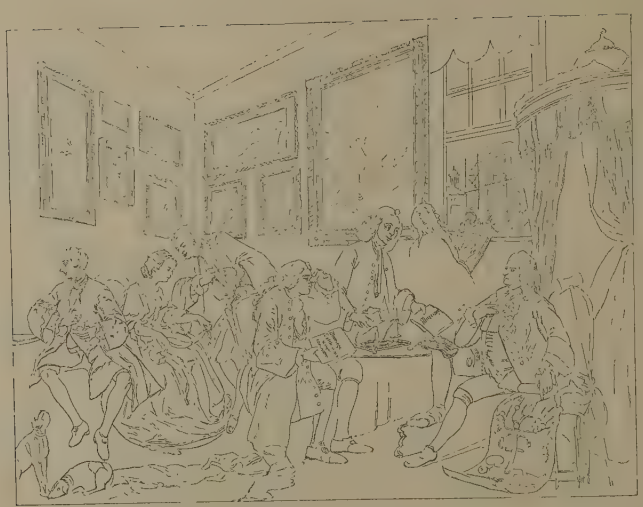
The artistic quality of his work was little considered. It was William Hogarth, satirist; no one thought or cared much about William Hogarth, painter. His engravings and pictures were accepted for their matter rather than for their manner; and, with the exception of people directly interested in art as art, they are so accepted to this day.

It cut Hogarth to the quick that he was not considered a great artist, and that people looked only at his subjects. He was aware of possessing fine pictorial qualities, and wondered that people did not recognize them; yet he knowingly rendered them subordinate by the great prominence he gave to his subject. In his day and country the story-telling theme, the dramatic climax, the moral teaching, were considered an end and an aim of painting. He himself said as much, and so designed his work. There is something peculiarly English, perhaps, in this point of view, as has been already suggested. English painting did not concern itself with architectural decoration, but, under Hogarth at least, it seems to have derived from the stage. He was probably the first one to make it a vehicle for illustrating themes pertinent to literature. His serial pictures were the painted acts of a drama—acts written with a paint-brush instead of with a pen. They were read scene by scene, like a book, each picture being a chapter, and each chapter having time-movement. To comprehend them his audience required literary intelligence rather than pictorial imagination. The idea that his pictures were decorative panels, and had artistic qualities pleasing to the eye regardless of their subjects, could have occurred to but few; and yet they were decorative in a very high degree. The story-teller was clever indeed, but the painter was infinitely more clever—in fact, little short of a marvel, considering his period and that he was the first of the school. He quarreled with the "connoisseurs" all his life because they would not recognize him as the equal of Correggio and Van Dyck; but reckoning with the fate that usually befalls the innovator, he seems to have fared not badly. His own generation recognized him as a great satirist and moralist, and it is safe to say that future generations will recognize him as a great painter.

Hogarth was born in London, November 10, 1697. His father was an unsuccessful schoolmaster, and at the time of the son's birth an equally unsuccessful literary hack in London. His uncle, too, had literary aspirations, and wrote satirical poetry that was char-

MARRIAGE À LA MODE (DETAIL), BY WILLIAM HOGARTH.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.



acterized as wanting in "grammar, metre, sense, and decency." The painter's school education was probably slight, for he was early apprenticed to Ellis Gamble, a silversmith, at the sign of the Golden Angel; and under him Hogarth learned to engrave and decorate silver plate with scrolls, devices, and coats of arms. He was not satisfied with such work, and had hopes of another sort in his youthful mind. "Engraving on copper was at twenty years of age my utmost ambition," he says; and he soon began engraving business cards, tickets, and booksellers' plates. He also designed and engraved the plates of the "South Sea" and the "Lottery," and illustrated Aubry de la Mottraye's "Travels"; but none of these works showed great talent. The illustrations were graceful but not noteworthy, except for what they tell us of Hogarth's early taste, which seems to have had some French bias. The illustrations to Butler's "Hudibras," which followed, were more of kin to Dutch art, and had a coarse, harsh fiber running through them indicative of what was to come.

His ambition soon extended itself to the painting of pictures, and here he began battling against odds. For he had little systematic education as a painter. He was no passed master in drawing, but he had habituated himself to mental impressions of form, and probably "drew out of his head," as the saying is, until the form looked right, resorting at times perhaps to a model with a difficult piece of work. He attended Sir James Thornhill's art school in Covent Garden, and he must have learned considerable there; for Sir James, though not a great popular success, was far from being the incompetent bungler with the brush that people have chosen to consider him. He had not mental strength, and was French-Italian in taste; but he knew how to draw tolerably well, and his line, types, and composition are apparent in Hogarth's large religious pictures. But making due allowance for this teaching and for the occasional traces of foreign influence, like that of Watteau, Teniers, Callot, Chardin, and still Hogarth's education as a painter remains something of a mystery. However it was accomplished, the transition from an indifferent engraver to a master of the brush was quickly made, and was little short of astonishing.

In 1729 Hogarth ran away with and married his master's only daughter, Jane Thornhill, and set up in life as engraver and painter in South Lambeth. The match was not relished by Sir James,

but after Hogarth came to popularity (and an income) he was duly forgiven. He began to engrave and publish his own plates, and to paint some small conversation pictures, in measure, like the work of Lancret. Before 1732 he had painted the "Wanstead Assembly," the "Meeting of a Committee of the House of Commons at the Fleet Prison, 1729" (one of his most charming pieces of tone and color), scenes from the "Beggar's Opera," the "Indian Emperor," and some small portrait groups.

Between 1730 and 1733 he painted his first notable success, the "Harlot's Progress." There were six pictures in the series, and they were afterward engraved. Hogarth explained the series by saying: "I have endeavored to treat my subject as a dramatic writer. My picture is my stage; my men and women my players, who, by means of certain actions and gestures, are to exhibit a dumb-show." He could not have made a more exact explanation of the subject; and the subject was the only thing in which his audience was interested. The "Harlot's Progress" was a moral tale in paint, carrying over six acts. The play—the story—was the thing. Had the series not been destroyed by fire, we might to-day find that there was something else to it than the "dumb-show"—something of decorative beauty in form and color. But the subject of it rather than the art of it caught the fancy of the town, and Hogarth immediately followed up its success by the "Rake's Progress," in eight pictures, now in the Soane Museum. This was not so successful with the populace, though it made a savage lunge at high life. The two series had made him famous, and his satires were in demand; yet at this very time the painter in him seemed to revolt at mere popular success, and he turned back sharply to an early ambition of excelling in the "great style of history-painting."

In 1736 he produced two enormous pictures for St. Bartholomew's Hospital, with figures over life-size, representing the "Pool of Bethesda" and the "Good Samaritan." They were a first attempt at large pictures, and though not exceptionally good, they were not exceptionally bad, as we have been told. They displayed ability, but there was no applause for them at the time; and Hogarth, not wishing to sink into a "portrait manufacturer," as he put it, returned to his small pictures, his plates, and his public. The "Distressed Poet," the "Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn," the "Enraged Musician," came next; and then, after a unique auction of his pictures, at which the two "Progresses"

fetched only two hundred and seventy-three pounds, he produced his "Marriage à la Mode," six pictures in a series, now in the National Gallery. After this he did some portraits of Lord Lovat, Mr. Garrick, and others; got up "Industry and Idleness," twelve plates illustrating apprentice life; painted the effective "March to Finchley"; engraved "Beer Street," "Gin Lane," and the "Four Stages of Cruelty," three uninteresting and coarse studies in criminology; and painted an insular, ill-natured fling at the French, called the "Roast Beef of Old England" or "Calais Gate." In 1752 he produced two more large historical pictures—one of "Moses Brought to Pharaoh's Daughter," now in the Foundling Asylum, and one of "Paul Before Felix," belonging to the Society of Lincoln's Inn.

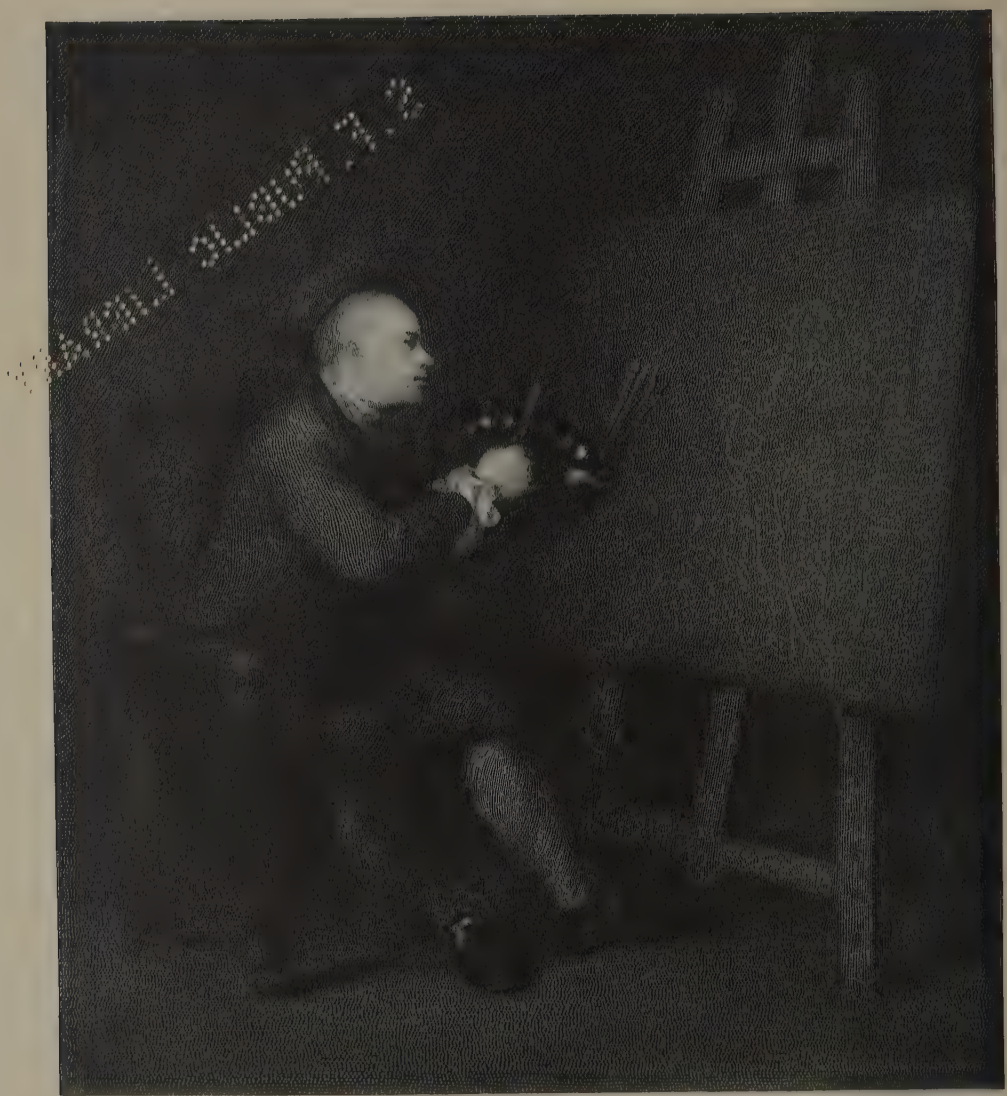
Hogarth was now fifty-four, and had perhaps done his best work, but his fighting spirit was by no means stilled. He wrote a book called the "Analysis of Beauty," to "fix the fluctuating of taste," in which he went out of his way to attack the "black masters" of Italy, and incidentally to assert his own superiority. In reality his quarrel was more with the picture-dealers who brought over the "ship-loads of manufactured Dead Christs, Holy Families, and Madonnas," than with the old masters. "The connoisseurs and I are at war, you know, and because I hate them they think I hate Titian — and let them." But the "Analysis of Beauty" was not a very lucid performance (Walpole called it "silly"), and it brought Hogarth many hard knocks from his enemies. He who had been such a biter soon felt himself bit, and "Painter Pugg," as they called him, afforded considerable amusement to the satirists of the day.

He went on, however, but with slackened vigor, to paint the "Election," four satirical canvases now in the Soane Museum, and to get out some prints of minor importance. The fancy for historical painting came to him once more, and he painted three pictures as an altarpiece for St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, now in the Academy of Clifton. For these he got five hundred pounds, and was vastly proud of getting such a sum for his work. In 1757 he was appointed sergeant-painter to the king, and thought to confine himself thereafter to portraiture; but two years after his appointment he announced that he would finally abandon the brush for the graver. Before doing so he painted the "Lady's Last Stake" and the "Sigismunda" in the National Gallery, for which Mrs. Hogarth is said to have acted as the model. He did take up the

graver again, but with weakened wit, producing the plates of the "Times," which got him into a quarrel with his whilom friends Churchill and the "heaven-born" Wilkes. The quarrel resulted in Hogarth's pride getting badly battered, and Wilkes having his cock-eyes perpetuated in caricature. After that there is little to record. The artist's work ended with the plate of the "Bathos," and the man died on October 26, 1764, at his house in Leicester Fields, where he had lived most of his life.

Such, in brief, was the life of William Hogarth — a life that is both illustrated and contradicted by his pictures. To the public he was a pugnacious little man, one who believed in justice and uprightness, and never minced words in denouncing social immorality. His subjects would indicate the coarse-grained satirist, the man who meant to shake the sides and at the same time preach a sermon. He was regarded as something of a Wilkes in paint — a slasher and a bruiser of reputations for righteousness' sake, a denouncer of evil, an opponent of the old masters, and one knows not what else besides. Undoubtedly he was in measure the product of a degraded time, and had some degraded instincts that cropped out in his works; but these were only a part of the man, and the poorer, more ignoble part at that. There was another side, about which he said little, because his public was not interested, but it is fully revealed in his pictures. The pictures show that under the coarse mask of the satirist was a feeling as refined as any known to English painting. Hogarth the satirist and Hogarth the painter were like two different natures. One was savage, brutish, almost hyena-like in the laugh over the unwholesome; the other was the embodiment of tenderness, delicacy, and charm.

The brutish nature is apparent in many plates and paintings: the "Modern Midnight Conversation," the "Election," the "Progresses," the "Marriage à la Mode." Take the "Rake's Progress," for instance, and study the tragic horror of the gambling-scene — the cold-bloodedness of the hands grasping the money, the frenzy of the young man kneeling upon the floor, his hands clenched in agony, the utter indifference of those about him. Consider the picture called the "Orgies" — the uproar of the drunken women, the bestiality of the faces, the coarseness of the actions, the gutter quality of the whole scene. Pass on to the last picture, the "Madhouse," where the rake lies on the floor in the foreground, without mind, feeling, or even clothing; around him hideous types of



PORTRAIT OF HOGARTH, BY HIMSELF.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON.

the maniac, and back of him gloom, chains, grated windows, and the grave. It is not possible to sup more full of horrors.

But dismiss the subjects from mind, study the pictures for what they look rather than for what they mean, and see with what wonderful taste and refinement the man has painted them. Notice the gamblers at the table for their grouping and action; see with what skill the painter has drawn the room and filled it with atmosphere, and with what charm he has woven through that atmosphere his subtile and beautiful scheme of color. In the "Orgies" picture notice the woman in the foreground pulling off her shoes and stockings for the dance; and, as art, could anything be more beautiful than the abandon and grace of the action, the beauty of the color, the setting and relief of the figure? See again the circle of women around the table; how delicately the reds, blues, yellows, and grays of the dresses harmonize and run together! Notice the angle of the room; the Roman emperors on the wall; the little girl standing at the door, so beautiful in color and painting. Could anything be more exquisite than this treatment? And there, in that charnel-house of the mind, the mad-house, are two women standing in the background, one dressed in pink silk, the other in silver-gray, than which Watteau never painted anything more graceful or more delicate. In the painter's mind, what mission had these beings of another sphere in such a place? Were they not put there as atoning loveliness? It must have been a strange imagination that could entertain such visions of beauty and deformity at one and the same time — a strange nature that could be so coarse in thought, so refined in feeling and execution. Jan Steen occasionally reeked of the bagnio without knowing it, and Goya was sometimes hideous through mental infirmity; but Hogarth knowingly compounded viciousness with purity, and married Beauty to the Beast; he consciously gilded the gutter with the rainbow hues of heaven.

There is no mistaking the moralist in Hogarth. He depicted vice with a purpose. Yet one may doubt if, as a painter, he liked this moralizing with the paint-brush any too well. From his various attempts at historical painting, one might conclude that he wished to paint other things, but the public would not allow him to do so. His historical canvases attracted little notice, but his satires were applauded. He was a man who reckoned with success, and perhaps thought it better to be first as a satirist than last

as a painter in the grand style. In other words, he supplied a demand, and possibly contented his own soul by putting forth his work in a refined, painter-like manner.

In his story-telling subjects his strong feature was his mimic sense and his power of characterization. The influence of the theater appears here again. Shows of all sorts interested him as a child, he tells us; the dramatic was his natural gift, the stage his study, and a knowledge of physiognomy one of his earliest acquirements. Characterization came to him as it might to a trained actor. He knew almost infallibly how a feeling or emotion made itself manifest in face or action. Look, for instance, at Mr. Cole's engraving of the detail from the "Marriage à la Mode," where the marriage contract is being drawn up, and see how strongly hit off are the flippant vanity of the young fop admiring himself in the mirror, the peevish listlessness of the prospective bride playing with her ring. It is a milder piece of sarcasm than Hogarth usually indulged in, but how absolute it is! The people of the "Progresses," the "Election," and the "March to Finchley" are just as decisively epitomized.

Characterization shows again in his portraiture. He objected to "manufacturing" portraits, and yet some of his noblest pieces are in this field. Individuality of form and feature he grasped unerringly, even when he had himself for a model, as in the small picture engraved by Mr. Cole. The "Garrick and Wife" at Windsor Castle is a little more precise and non-elastic, but shrewdly observed and full of force; and the half-length of his own wife, belonging to Lord Rosebery, is one of the most refined pieces of vital portraiture in the whole reach of the English school. The color-scheme alone — a scheme of grays touched with lilacs — forestalls the color delicacy of to-day, and the face shows as distinguished drawing as Hogarth ever did. The "Mrs. Dawson" at Edinburgh, and the "Peg Woffington" in Sir Charles Tennent's collection, have much of the same quality. The portraits of "Miss Fenton as Polly Peacham," and Hogarth with his dog, in the National Gallery, are of a much poorer quality; and even the panel showing the heads of Hogarth's servants, though forceful, is lacking in color and somewhat hard in execution. The feeling that they once actually lived, however, is as strong as with the "Captain Coram" or the sketchy "Lord Lovat." Character marks all his heads.

His large religious pictures in the Foundling Asylum and in St. Bartholomew's Hospital were experiments. Hogarth knew little about large-scaled figure-painting, and when he designed such work he did little more than enlarge a small conception. In the "Moses Brought to Pharaoh's Daughter," the princess is a pretty "Marriage à la Mode" type, cleverly handled, as is the girl back of her; and Moses is, of course, a Drury Lane urchin in green dress and flaxen hair. The "Pool of Bethesda" has an amphitheater of ruins in the background, a figure of Christ lacking in dignity, a typical street mob about him, a girl with a white cap like a Hals, a woman in white like a Chardin, a nude figure like a Boucher, and a man in the foreground like a Titian. The "Good Samaritan," on the side wall next it, is no improvement. They are all well enough painted, but a bit disjointed and incongruous in conception. The mind of Hogarth did not readily rise to nobility of type after dealing with models from the London slums. Occasionally we see in his pictures a figure that is airy and graceful, but these appear more at home in his small conversation groups, and in his single-figure pieces, like the "Lady's Last Stake" and the "Sigismunda." The figure in the former approaches to nobility, and so far as the type is concerned, the "Sigismunda" is elevated enough; but in painting it Hogarth was trying to outdo a supposed Correggio, and overworked the canvas. It lacks in freedom and spontaneity.

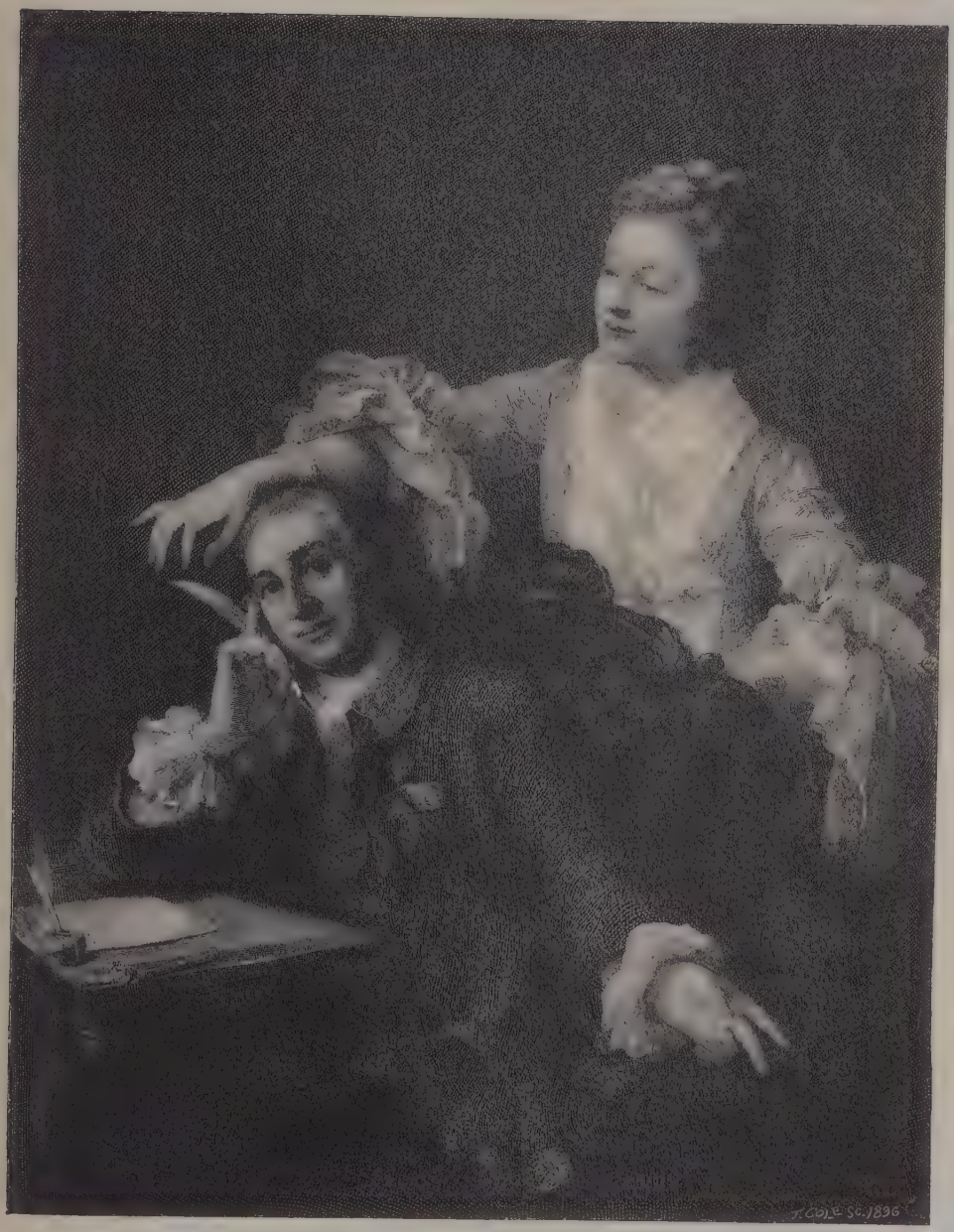
Hogarth was not a landscape-painter, yet he knew a great deal about landscape, as the first picture in the "Election" series discloses. The "Calais Gate," too, shows knowledge of sky and sunlight; and in the first picture of the "Marriage à la Mode" series there is a street or square, seen through a window, that is astonishing in its delicate drawing, its value in light, and its feeling of air. The "Arrest" in the "Rake's Progress" shows conclusively that he knew how to paint a street with air in it, sky over it, and buildings placed in their proper planes. In fact, Hogarth could paint almost anything, except animals, and in nothing was he stronger than in still life. His cups and saucers and tablecloths are as beautiful as Chardin's; his beef in the "Calais Gate" is worthy of any Dutchman; and neither Pater nor Watteau was his superior in painting silks, draperies, and furniture.

Technically he was uneven in drawing. Sometimes he was harsh and lacking in freedom, at other times quite rhythmical and

flowing. He seldom drew like an academician, trained to ease by knowledge, and giving the whole truth of form. On the contrary, he frequently cut out the accidental by a loose, broken line, and summarized an object, like Ostade or Millet. Knowledge of anatomy he showed in more than one nude; and motion, life, abandon, he pictured well in the "Orgies" picture of the "Rake's Progress," in the "Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn," in the "Marriage à la Mode." All his people have weight and bulk, and they all stand or sit firmly. This is noticeable in his own portrait, in the "Lord Lovat," in the fat singing-master of the fourth "Marriage à la Mode" picture.

Moreover, all Hogarth's people hold their places by virtue of their atmospheric setting. Each one is given a proper value. Not one of the old English masters understood the problem of *enveloppe* — the placing of figures in atmosphere — so thoroughly as Hogarth. I have only to refer to the little family group (No. 1153) in the National Gallery for confirmation of this. The figure of the man standing at the right, the group about the table, the table itself, are absolute in their truthful relations to the foreground, the room, and the wall decorations. The setting is so true that the air of the room can be almost felt. Look again at the "Duel" scene in the "Marriage à la Mode," and a similar effect is apparent, though the illumination is different. It is one of the first candle- and fire-light pictures painted in England, and it is a little arbitrary in its lighting; but the relation of objects is not disturbed. Everything keeps its place, and the picture holds together as a whole.

Hogarth was not less skilful in the handling of color. There is a sharp brick quality often shown in his flesh that is peculiar to English painting, but in other respects he is most forceful while being most subtile. His tones are usually pure, though he often used broken notes to attain delicacy. All colors — reds, blues, greens, grays, Jan Steen's yellows — are seen upon his canvases, and they seem to be laid on easily, without kneading, mixing, or emendation. Moreover, they are to-day in an excellent state of preservation; for Hogarth used no bitumen, like those who came after him, and tried no experiments with fugitive colors. Many faces by Reynolds are stricken with a death pallor; Raeburn's shadows are pot-black; and Turner's skies have turned chalk-white or lemon-yellow: but Hogarth's colors are as clear and pure



GARRICK AND HIS WIFE, BY WILLIAM HOGARTH.

WINDSOR CASTLE.

as when first painted. He knew very well what he needed, and resorted to no studio expedient in obtaining it. Frank, honest man that he was, he painted in a frank, honest way. His handling is not remarkable, but it is effective. The sketch of the "Shrimp Girl" shows both his brush-work and his color to advantage. It is a scheme in reds, browns, and grays, done swiftly, but with knowledge, taste, and skill.

His composition was perhaps his weakest feature. It is the final and convincing proof of the influence of the theater upon his art. One cannot look at the "Progresses," the "Marriage à la Mode," the "Lady's Last Stake," without realizing that they are stage tableaux, the painted climaxes of a play. The setting of the scenes, the grouping of figures, the disposition of properties, the planes in which the figures stand, the exits and the entrances, all point to the theater. He probably found his characters in real life, but he arranged them on the boards like a stage-manager. This led to something akin to the artificial, to overmuch detail, and to the crowding of space. The object of many accessories was, of course, to suggest the tale that could not be spoken; and for the story-telling purpose it was effective enough, but as pictorial composition it was sometimes unfortunate. Composition never was a strong feature of the English painters, and Hogarth, the beginner, was not always successful with it. As with many another painter, his least elaborate compositions were his best.

There can be no doubt that Hogarth's instincts were those of a painter. His feeling for color and air, his handling of the brush, his sense of delicacy and refinement in the placing of tones, all mark him as an artist whose medium of expression was necessarily pigment. His trenching upon literature in his subjects, his constant jumbling of pigment with figment, were requirements thrust upon him by his age and audience; but neither that, nor the fact that his audience applauded him for his satires rather than for his painting, invalidates the excellence of his art. The *raison d'être* for the subjects has passed away, but the painting still lives to give its author high rank. It is worthy of more study than it has yet received, for there were only four great originals in old English painting — Hogarth, Gainsborough, Constable, and Turner. Hogarth was the first, and some there be who do not hesitate to say he was the greatest of them all.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

THE "SHRIMP GIRL" is a sketch, life-sized upon a canvas twenty inches wide by twenty-six high, and is one of the best and most popular of Hogarth's works. It is brushed in with thin body color, of a warm gray mixture, the face and upper portion of the bust being brightened with a mellow reddish hue, reminding one of the color of a boiled shrimp in its modulations from more vivid touches of red into golden and pearly and brown and amber tints,— charming in its fusion and subtle play of tones,— the whole enveloped in mist, moving and fluent, and lighted by the morning sun, which permeates with its warm rays the fogginess of the background. In short, it may be said to be a London sun and a London atmosphere taken at a happy moment.

And this is the "Shrimp Girl." Look at her! Laughing and sprightly and innocent, a mere shrimp herself, tender and sweet, and as yet uncontaminated by the grosser fry of Billingsgate; cousin, doubtless, to the "Rat-catcher's Daughter," whom she is very likely saluting from across the road—"whose father caught rats while she sold sprats, all round and about that quarter." "How charming," one is apt to exclaim while contemplating it, "is the innocence of youth! How lovely its face always is, whether seen in the guise of a fishmonger's or a king's child!" And no doubt Hogarth thought this way, as he lingered caressingly about the mouth and nose of his subject, and with inimitable strokes touched in the eyes, which give such a playful and bewitching twinkle to the expression.

Here is that suggestion of life and movement which a great master often hits in a sketch. It was well that Hogarth left it in the state that it is, and did not go into detail, as in the case of his more ambitious and elaborate composition which hangs by its side in the National Gallery, the "Sigismunda Mourning over the Heart of Guiscardo." This work, though costing the artist infinitely more thought and labor, is yet rigid, lacking that loose and atmospheric quality which is the charm of the "Shrimp Girl," because too painfully studied in its parts, as any one may see by comparing the two.

It is a pity that the compass of my block did not admit of my showing the whole of the "Marriage Contract," but the detail given is one of the most beautiful and characteristic bits of the whole series, which consists of six canvases, uniform in size, and measuring each thirty-five and a half inches long by twenty-seven and a half inches high. Hogarth was the first English artist who conceived and executed the idea of representing a series of adventures on canvas in which the career of one character was conducted from the beginning to the end; so that, aside from their artistic charm, his works, from their unique power of story-telling, possess somewhat the interest of a novel. His extraordinary genius in this respect may be seen even in the detail which I have chosen. The pair— the one an earl, the other a countess— are awaiting the drawing up of the marriage contract; the lawyers busy with this matter form a group in the original to the right; and it is clearly to be seen that it is an affair of thrift, but none of love, for the earl has turned his back upon his betrothed, and, with an air of

self-complacence, is engaged with the reflection of his face, plastered with beauty-spots, in the mirror. This is a satirical touch upon the custom of the times when beaus as well as belles wore beauty-spots. Observe that he is in the act of taking a pinch of snuff, by which is conveyed the suggestion that he does n't care that much for the creature to whom he is being linked. The two dogs in the corner which are chained together have also some bearing upon the theme, from their being thus forcibly united. The countess, too, toys aimlessly with the marriage ring, which she has strung upon her silk handkerchief, while she listens (oh, the shame of it!) to the oily flattery, the whisperings of love, from the affable young clerk by her side. It is this young fellow who, in the sequel, becomes the paramour of the countess and kills the earl in a duel. But note the face of horror — the gorgon-like head — that peers down upon the scene from the oval mirror in the background above! It is the ancestral ghost — the head of an ancient family — that looks forth distraught upon the consummation of the ruin. The countess poisons herself in the end.

But it would require the delicate art of a Thackeray or a Dickens adequately to do justice in words to the many passages of satirical humor that abound in this series. Any one interested in the art of Hogarth could not do better, after studying his works in the National Gallery, than pay a visit to the Soane Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where, besides the large series of the "Election,"— four magnificent and mirth-provoking examples,— there is the "Rake's Progress," a series of eight canvases, twenty-four and a half inches high by thirty and a half inches wide, ranking next in importance to his works in the National Gallery. In the composition of the "Gaming-house," where the spendthrift has lost all, the note of rage and despair is terrific. He has dropped upon one knee, facing the spectator and occupying the foreground, throwing one arm up and the other down, forming a tense and oblique line shooting from the floor upward of the most dramatic intensity imaginable. It seems to rend the air like a diabolical screech, in which the last chord of reason is forever snapped asunder. But the note of pathos underlying this series, and which should not be overlooked, is in the love of the girl who, though in the outset, it is seen, the rake has seduced and abandoned, yet sticks by him through thick and thin with the faithfulness known only to true love; now appearing with her child in the background in the "Marriage" of the rake to the ugly old one-eyed heiress; again coming forward in the nick of time to save him from a debtor's jail with her all in the "Arrest"; and in the end nursing him, all broken in grief, in his final wind-up in the "Mad-house." It is enough to wring the stoutest heart.

Nor is the art displayed by Hogarth in these things one whit inferior to his power of description. Apart from their moralistic teachings, they are great works of art. To return to our detail: Observe how beautifully the light falls upon the draperies of the group! How it envelops them! The blue of the bridegroom's garment swims gently into the bride's white silk robe. A harmonious whole pervades his works, a refinement and sober dignity that will not allow of any bright and spotty coloring. He is a chiaroscurist; he does not look at color apart from its value of light and shade; and in this he stands on modern ground, on the ground of the great Venetians, of the Dutchmen, and of the Spaniards. He doubtless owed much to his schooling as an engraver, having been led thereby, perforce, to view nature in its vital aspects of light and shade. In the general lighting of his pictures he follows the

traditions of the Dutch and Flemish school.

Hogarth shows his originality equally in his portraits as in his other works. The sentiment displayed in his "Portrait of Garrick and his Wife" cannot fail to please most people. That delightful creature stepping up lightly and playfully from behind to relieve Garrick of his pen must have engaged the artist's fancy. Evidently her "Little Davy," as he was called, has failed to hear, in his abstraction, the repeated summons of the dinner-bell, engrossed as he is writing his prologue to Foote's "Comedy of Taste"; and one may even fancy the wit and pleasantry of the old-time prologue reflected in the lines of his genial countenance. There is also in this pleasing conceit of the artist a suggestion, as it were, of a harmonious home life that one feels must have been the fortunate lot of the amiable pair. Hogarth was an intimate friend of Garrick, of whom the latter said: "I love him as a man and reverence him as an artist." But he must have had a very choleric temper, for one day — presumably when he had just finished the portrait in question — a dispute arose between the two upon the subject, when the artist, in a fit of irritation, drew his brush across the face. It is for this reason, it is said, that the eyes of Garrick, being coarsely painted and ill-drawn, are evidently by another hand. The picture remained unpaid for at his death, when the artist's widow sent it to Garrick without any demand. The figures are life-size, and the canvas, which measures three feet four inches wide by four feet two inches high, belonged to Queen Victoria, and was in her private gallery at Windsor Castle, where I was kindly granted permission to go at will in the absence of the royal family. It is remarkably well preserved, though the coloring may have gone a little black. But it is a fact worthy of remark that all the canvases of Hogarth will be found in very excellent preservation and as though painted not long ago; whereas the works of much later men — Reynolds, Turner, Wilkie, and others — are cracked and faded generally. The dress of the lady is yellow, and the coat of the other dark blue.

It was upon the completion of the National Portrait Gallery, and prior to its being thrown open to the public in the spring of 1896, that I was kindly granted leave, by its director, Mr. Cust, to work on the engraving of the portrait of Hogarth by himself shown as painting the "Comic Muse," which canvas now does honor to one of the upper rooms of the gallery — Room 11. This shows the artist in his sixty-first year — six years before his death. His shaven face, closely cropped hair, and cap thrown to one side, gives point to Leigh Hunt's remark upon appearance — that he had a sort of "knowing jockey look." He is described in Dobson's excellent memoir of him as "a sturdy, outspoken, honest, obstinate, pugnacious little man; . . . as a companion he was witty and genial. . . . He liked good clothes, good living, good order in his household; and he was proud of the rewards of industry and respectability. As a master he was exacting in his demands, but punctual in his payments; as a servant he did a full day's work and insisted upon his wage."

The canvas is small, measuring fourteen and a half by fifteen and a half inches, and is in excellent condition, being preserved under glass, as are the English pictures generally. If this were not the case, the London fog would soon cause their deterioration. On the palette which the artist holds may be seen the fewness of the colors which he employed. He did not experiment with newly discovered colors, as did Reynolds and others, which is one reason for the enduring quality of his works. His sharp and

THE SHRIMP GIRL—A SKETCH BY WILLIAM HOGARTH.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

incisive manner may be noted in the way he touches in his lights and in the firmness of his modeling; while contrasted with this is the treatment of the shadows, which are clear, deep, and broad. But the coloring throughout — the fine, warm, silvery tone, reminding one of true daylight — is certainly very fine. The coat is green, the breeches of a dull reddish tone, the floor of a neutral brownish tint, the canvas upon the easel of a warm gray, and the background delightful in its neutrality and depth. As a bit of coloring it must be seen to be appreciated, and a glance then at the pictures surrounding it will convince any one of its immeasurable superiority and refinement. It was standing before this little Hogarth and sighing in admiration over it that a famous American artist — a genius of our day — said to me in a partly confidential tone: "Let them talk as they please, but the English never had but one artist, and that artist was Hogarth." T. C.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE, BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

COLLECTION OF EARL SPENCER, ALTHORP.

CHAPTER II

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

(1723–1792)

IF family anecdote is to pass current for history, it would seem that all the famous painters were infant prodigies with the pencil. They were all of them idle school-boys who spoiled text-books with marginal drawings, charcoaled newly whitewashed walls, and outlined various animals on stone, wood, or any smooth surface that came to hand. Reynolds was no exception to the rule. He, too, defaced wall and book, and once, having backed up a Latin exercise with graphic delineation, his unsympathetic father recorded his opinion of it thus: "This was drawn by Joshua in school out of pure idleness." Of course after Joshua became famous his father was pleased to remember these supposed signs of incipient genius; and had he tried hard he might have remembered signs of the same sort shown by his ten other children, who did not become famous. All children use the pencil, make rhymes, and fight mimic battles "out of pure idleness," but these commonplace facts of child life are afterward remembered only of the great painters, poets, and generals. Reynolds's figures, like Giotto's sheep, would seem to prove the boy in the artist rather than the artist in the boy.

There was nothing remarkable about Sir Joshua's childhood. He was born at Plympton, July 16, 1723, and probably received a better education at the hands of his clerical father than most boys of his time. There was some talk at first of his studying medicine, but matters shaped themselves otherwise. The youth wished to be a painter, and at eighteen he was sent up to London to study painting under Hudson, with whom he remained for two years, learning something about the way the old masters drew, and paint-

ing some portraits on his own account. Then he suddenly left London, returning to Devonshire, where he passed some time, to no profit, as he afterward seemed to think. Later he, with two sisters, took a house at Plymouth, and in 1746 he was again in London, painting portraits for a living, and trying to get on in the world.

He was possessed of social qualities and soon made friends. Fortunately enough for him, he won the good opinion of Captain Keppel, who invited the young painter to go with him to the Mediterranean on his ship the *Centurion.* Reynolds accepted, voyaging to Gibraltar and Algiers, and painting portraits whenever the opportunity was afforded. In 1749 he found himself in Leghorn, and soon after in Rome, where for two years he gave himself up to a study of the Italians, chiefly Michelangelo and Raphael. It was while studying in the Vatican that he caught cold, became deaf, and was compelled to use an ear-trumpet for the rest of his life. He spent some months in the year 1752 studying the pictures at Florence, Parma, and Venice, shortly afterward returning by Paris to London, where he at once set up a studio in St. Martin's Lane and began portrait-painting as a profession.

At first his style was not applauded by the painters, and Ellis told him he did not paint in the least like Sir Godfrey Kneller. His method was somewhat novel, but he saw to it that the innovation should not be too startling for public approval. He met with encouragement almost from the start. The Duke of Devonshire and his friend Keppel gave him commissions; others followed, and the painter was soon able to move to Great Newport Street and to raise his prices. Something of a courtier, and always a gentleman, Reynolds had little trouble in making his way with the great people of the day, noble and otherwise. It was not long before he knew almost every one of note. Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Garrick, Wilkes, became his dining companions at "The Club" and elsewhere; and their table-talk was for many years the town talk. In this brilliant circle Reynolds himself cut no inconsiderable figure, for at thirty he had achieved a fame that never left him.

The larger his acquaintance, the greater seemed his success as a portrait-painter. He had so many orders that assistants had to be called in. Again he moved to more spacious quarters in Leicester Square, and again he raised his prices. He was growing rich, and advertised the fact by setting up a coach. In 1768 came the founding of the Royal Academy. Reynolds was made its first

president, and the king knighted him. Five years later Oxford gave him the degree of D.C.L., and he was appointed painter to the king. Honors were falling fast upon him, but his head was not turned by them, and for all that he was the first portrait-painter of his time, he never relaxed his industry. He believed firmly in the efficacy of labor, and was never idle. At his apogee he was painting a hundred and fifty portraits a year. In 1781, and again in 1783, he made short trips in Belgium and Holland, studying and making notes of the pictures there; but as soon as he returned to London he took up the brush again like a young aspirant, trying with each new picture to rise above himself.

At sixty-six, in the full flush of his power, his labors were suddenly stopped. While painting, one day, the sight of his left eye grew blurred. He put down the brush, and never took it up again. In a few weeks he was blind in one eye and the other was affected. Some quarrel or misunderstanding arose in the Royal Academy, and Sir Joshua resigned its presidency, then resumed it again at the king's request, but finally gave it up in 1790, after twenty-one years of rule. He never married, his family were dead or scattered, and with his occupation gone the painter failed rapidly. He died February 23, 1792; and, after a funeral which all London attended, he was buried beside Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral. He left behind him a great reputation, a vast number of pictures (chiefly portraits), his "Academy Discourses" (so good in style that at one time Johnson was supposed to have written them), and sixty thousand pounds in money.

The manner in which Sir Joshua ordered his personal life is indicative of the spirit that influenced his art. There was nothing erratic, venturesome, or impulsive about either. It is difficult to believe that the man at any time, either in life or in art, possessed much fire, passion, or romance. He was too calm for either love or hatred, too conservative for brilliancy, too philosophical for enthusiasm. In art he placed less reliance upon inspiration than upon intelligent knowledge, believed the gospel of genius to be work, and thought originality a new way of saying old truths. Such ideas as these form the chief counts in his discourses to the students of the Royal Academy. "Excellence is granted to no man but as the reward of labor." And again: "Have no dependence on your own genius; if you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry

will supply their deficiency." His three stages of an art education were, first, learning the grammar of art; secondly, laying in a stock of ideas from the old masters; thirdly, independent action, but in moderation.

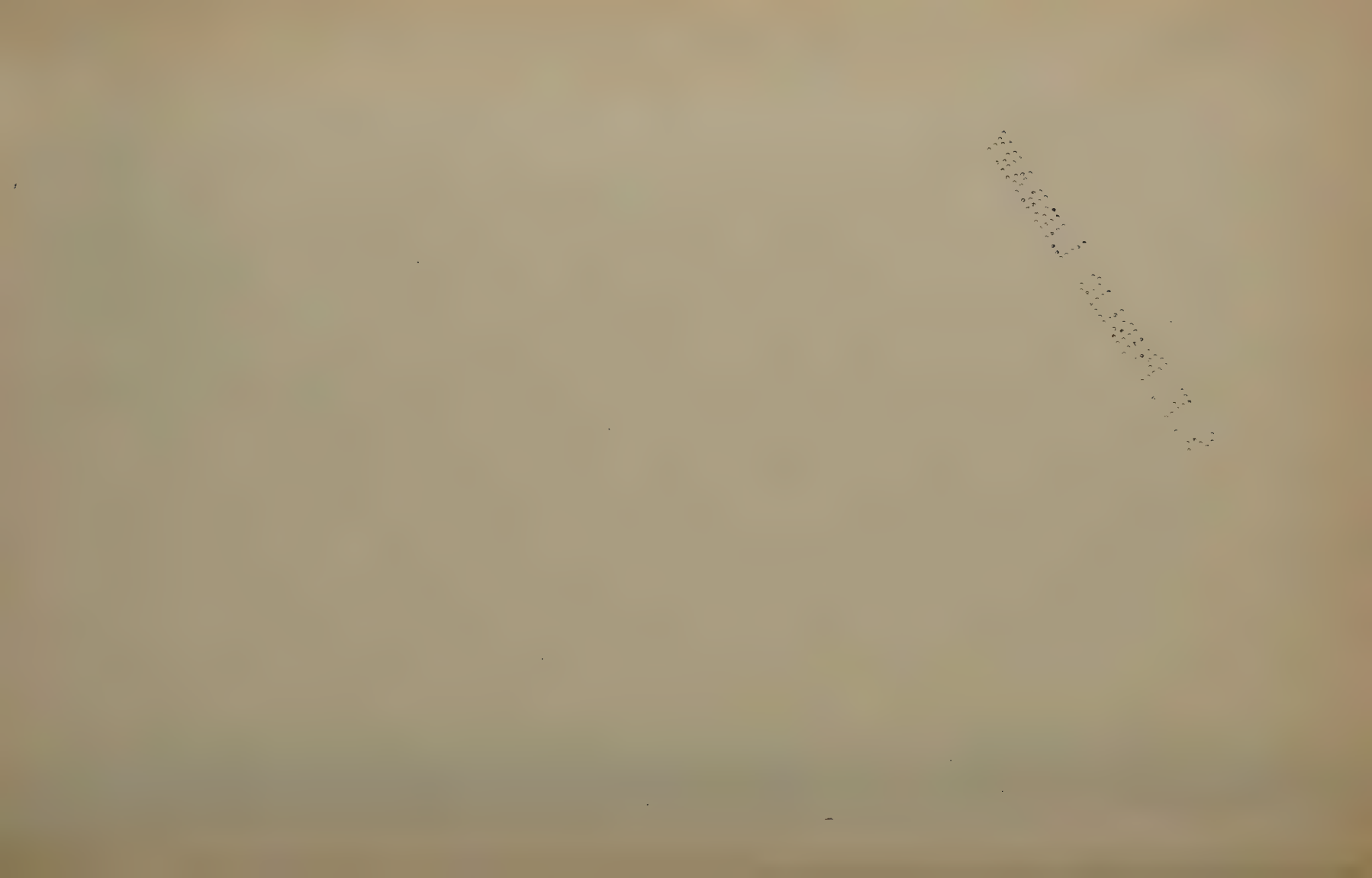
And Sir Joshua usually practised what he preached. He hugged conservatism, held fast to the traditions, and tried to keep his genius in abeyance to rule and method. That he had genius cannot be denied; but in his own mind he confounded it with energy, and thought himself successful through work. He had slaved over execution, he had studied the art of the past, and with much labor had made other people's excellences his own. Naturally he thought work and education accounted for his success. Undoubtedly they were a great aid to him. The stock of ideas from the old masters helped him; his borrowings from others and his powers of assimilation helped him; but many painters have possessed these qualities and yet never attained high rank. Success as the result of such accomplishments would explain genius out of existence. Sir Joshua's fame does not rest upon them. There was nothing in his technical mastery, wherever or however he got it, upon which to base a great reputation. His technique was the weakest feature of his art.

Sir Joshua's "borrowings" have been much talked about. It is true he could absorb excellences in others as silently and as gracefully as Raphael, and leave less of a trail behind; but it should be borne in mind that the education of the painter in eighteenth-century England was largely a matter of "borrowings." All the students of the time copied Raphael, Correggio, and Guido, and such a thing as a thorough academic training under a skilled master was not to be obtained. Indeed, it is not pushing the facts too hard to say that there was not a perfect craftsman in the school. Deficiency in training was made up for by taking hints from the old masters and by practising observation. Reynolds had greater chances than the others, and he improved them. "I know no man who has passed through life with more observation than Sir Joshua Reynolds," said Johnson.

What he observed as a pupil under Hudson we have slight means of knowing. Hudson was hard and dry in method, but, like all the painters of the time, he reverenced Van Dyck. And the Van Dyck doctrine of "painting noble men nobler still" Reynolds accepted in measure. He told his Academy students that it was

PORTRAIT OF LORD HEATHFIELD, BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.



the duty of the portrait-painter "to aim at discovering the perfections only of those whom he is to represent"— a maxim he himself did not always follow, though doubtless he believed in it. And of course he believed in the Italians, for they were the fashion of the day. In Rome, like many another painter, he was at first disappointed in Raphael, but afterward grew very fond of his work, and in consequence declared that taste in art was not natural, but acquired; not on the surface, but underneath. Michelangelo impressed him instantly and lastingly. He talked about him all his life, held him up as a model to his students, but he himself did not follow him, except in the oft-cited case of the "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse." He had nothing of Michelangelo's line, form, or spirit, nothing of Raphael's style or composition.

He talked less about Correggio and the Venetians, yet here he helped himself more freely. It is not difficult to put a hand on the supposed Correggio that furnished him with the model for his coy children. Certainly the sidelong glance, the wavy hair, the small chin, the arch bend of the head, came from Parma. In Venice he studied Titian's light and shade, and copied it in parts, as he had copied Raphael's figures at Rome. Paolo Veronese also had an influence on his color, though Sir Joshua talked little about him. Nor did he discourse much on Guido and Guercino, yet one feels that his nymphs and Venuses were drawn from those sources — affectation and all. Besides these painters, he had the contemporary admiration for the Carracci: the eclecticism of Bologna was in both his theory and his art, and he even recommended Lodovico Carracci as a model in painting.

But notwithstanding Sir Joshua's admiration for the Bolognese, he was a very good judge of painting. He had not studied the art of Europe without profit. In the main he was right about Michelangelo, right in thinking Velasquez's "Innocent X" one of the greatest portraits in the world, right in thinking that Jan Steen's style "might become even the design of Raphael." He knew very well how a thing should be done, but he did not always know how to do it. "Not having the advantage of an early academical education, I never had the facility of drawing the naked figure which an artist ought to have." No, he had not. His drawing of the figure was tentative, hesitating, uncertain, hardly ever complete or wholly satisfactory. Hands he sometimes drew easily, and faces he understood better than anything else — not

always drawing them truly, but painting them very cleverly with the brush, and giving the fleshy texture with much force. If one compares the "Lord Heathfield," the "Dr. Johnson," or any other portrait by Reynolds, with the "Cornelius van der Geest" portrait attributed to Van Dyck in the National Gallery, the difference between the tentative and the absolute will be immediately apparent. The drawing of the mouth, nose, eyes, cheeks, and forehead in the "Van der Geest" is positive, done easily, surely, unostentatiously; that of the "Heathfield" is rambling, questioning, groping. Doubtless much of Sir Joshua's unevenness was due to frequent emendation,— his wish to better each part,— but that in itself is proof of uncertainty. Still, though never having the positiveness of a Raphael, his drawing had a picturesque quality about it that rather helped than hurt his purpose. His art was not academic and therefore did not need severity or absolute accuracy.

Sir Joshua's success with composition was not greater than with drawing. He could pose a portrait-figure happily enough, but his so-called "historical" pictures were deficient in invention and imagination. He could not see nymphs and Venuses and classic groups except as some old master had seen them before him; and because he saw portrait-subjects, and did not see figure-subjects, is one reason why he succeeded with the former and virtually failed with the latter. At times, however, he was very clever in composing a family group, as the "Lady Cockburn and Children" will exemplify. The manner in which he has woven and intertwined the lines of the figures with the drapery, knit the whole group together in form and color, and made a complete ensemble, is worthy of all praise.

Color he experimented with all his life. He believed that the secret of it was known to the Venetians, but lost. "There is not a man on earth who has the least notion of coloring; we all have it equally to seek for and find out, as at present it is totally lost to the art." Sir Joshua sought for it with all pigments, mediums, and methods, and with some unfortunate results. In his experimental canvases painted during his early and middle periods he at times used fugitive blues, lakes, carmines, orpiments, mixing them with oil, wax, varnish — almost anything that would produce a desired effect. But the effect was often transient; the colors fled the canvas, the lights bleached, the shadows darkened, and as a result many of his otherwise fine portraits are to-day pallid and cold. In

fact, Sir Joshua's fading color was something of a town jest, and the girding Walpole suggested that his pictures should be paid for in annuities, to last as long as the pictures lasted.

The painter felt badly enough about his fleeing colors, and he so mended his manner that many of his later canvases gave no cause for criticism on that score. Some of them are to-day in excellent preservation. Moreover, they are fuller and richer than his earlier works. In color, as in light, he finally returned to Rubens. The "Lady Cockburn and Children" shows how ornate he could be and still keep within the bounds of good taste. Sir Joshua was not quite correct in saying no man living had any notion of color. He himself had a shrewd knowledge of it. His dictum about the use of warm and cold colors argues nothing whatever. He produced fine pieces of color on more than one occasion, not by virtue of any law or rediscovered secret, but because he had the color-instinct. Were he as much of a draftsman as a colorist, no one would be able to find many holes in his armor. As a brushman he was not remarkable, though effective, and occasionally he struck off the ornaments of a dress or the flow and fall of hair with the positiveness of a Velasquez. But he was too careful, as a rule, to trust the quick stroke. More often he thumbed and kneaded, amending with "just another touch," until finally the surface looked labored—"bready," as they say in the studios. Freedom of handling, in the Frans Hals sense, was not known to any member of the school. Romney and Raeburn and Lawrence were dashing enough, to be sure; but sometimes they struck wide of the mark. They never had the certain brush of a Hals.

It might be thought from his art principles that Sir Joshua would have evolved a style, a manner somewhat like Raphael, the Carracci, or even the eclectic Mengs; but he never did. He talked much of things established, but took good care not to have them too firmly established with him. Every picture he painted was, in measure, different from its predecessor. He was changing and improving with each effort, always striving for some new excellence, always ready to adopt a new suggestion. He might lack in early training, but he missed no opportunity in later study. Painstaking, industrious, persevering in the acquisition of knowledge, it is not remarkable that he finally became a painter of unusual culture. He never was quite spontaneous, never quite

original in the sense of inventing a method wholly his own, never quite perfect in craftsmanship. If examined closely, many of his works will be found wanting. Take, for instance, the portrait of "Lady Elizabeth Foster." It is not drawn, modeled, or painted. The features want articulation, the figure lacks solidity and substance, the color is chilly, the whole picture, even regarded as a sketch, lacks force. It will not stand by its technique alone. Yet, in spite of its sins of omission and commission, the portrait is most engaging, full of charm, full of loveliness. What is it about the work — about all of Sir Joshua's portraiture — that appeals to us so strongly?

It has been said that a portrait-painter puts no more in a head than there is in his own, which is equivalent to saying that every artist paints his own point of view. This was true of Sir Joshua. With all his eclecticism and his absorptions from hither and yon, he never forsook his own individual way of seeing things. If there was any struggle between the portrait-model before him and the established Italian or Dutch method of doing a portrait, it generally resulted in his trusting his own eyes. In the canvas the painter outbalanced academic rule, and to this day every one of his portraits bears the individual stamp and seal of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Now Sir Joshua's view was peculiarly attractive. He was conversant with the best side of social England in the eighteenth century, and was, moreover, a man of good breeding, refinement, and sensitive perceptions. Naturally he was in sympathy with everything well-bred and refined in his sitter. He saw that phase of character acutely, and selected it as best suited for his purpose. If there was anything manly about a man, feminine about a woman, or childlike about a child, he noticed it at once. And these were the qualities upon which he concentrated his strength. He appealed frankly and boldly to the taste for dignity, charm, winsomeness, loveliness, in the personal presence, and the appeal was not in vain — is not in vain to-day. The world has never been so deeply in love with the beauty of the ugly that it could not enjoy the beauty of the comely and the noble. Nor is there anything of idealism or flattery in this view. Pleasing qualities are just as real as repulsive ones. The painter always selects what he shall emphasize. Some there be who select the greasy qualities of Joan keeling the pot; but Sir Joshua preferred painting the most elevated and agreeable qualities of his sitters.

This was particularly true of his women. The eternal womanly he saw in every woman — saw it in Kitty Fisher and Nelly O'Brien as well as in the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Powis. Besides this, he saw in some haughtiness, loftiness, distinction; in others mildness, maternal feeling, sadness; in others again, gaiety, coquetry, gracefulness. How shrewd he was in his observation of the look, the pose, the smile that make women captivating! How sensitive he was to the young girl's modest glance, the coquette's sly roguery, the lady's frank demeanor! The witchery of women, the fascination of the sex, the nameless something that leads on to love, he knew by heart, though no wife taught him. And he knew with just what happy incident to portray them, though no old master gave him the hint. What, for instance, could be more winning than the "Viscountess Crosbie" coming out from behind a tree, a smile upon her face, and her hand outstretched in greeting! One's first exclamation is: "You charming creature! What a pity you are dead!" The graceful step and expectant look of "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire," as she comes down the terrace steps, the woman still in the duchess; the loveliness of "Mrs. Bradyll" and the "Ladies Waldegrave"; the coy impishness of "Mrs. Abington"; the questioning glance of "Perdita Robinson"; the demureness of "Kitty Fisher" — how very attractive they all are!

And how interested we become in the subject! You cannot be so enthusiastic over the women of Velasquez, Rubens, or Holbein. Even the Venetian women of Titian, perfect types of beauty as they are, provoke only a mild curiosity as to their personality. We rather overlook the painted in the painter. But Sir Joshua's people attract us, and the subject — the much-despised subject of modern art — has weight in this English portraiture. The painter intended that it should have weight — intended that people should know and feel the charm of the sitter. It is matter of history that he had the most noble and beautiful women of England for sitters. They look it. An air of distinction and refinement hangs about them as easily as a cloak. Women of less beauty and less nobility sat to him, but their pictures were never his great successes. He preferred the handsome woman, and it was a part of his selective sense that led him to paint her so often. He did not and could not entirely sympathize with the plain or the homely. Sir Joshua was fortunate, then, in having attractive subjects for his art. He

was fortunate again in having an attractive point of view. With such winning cards, it is easy to see that he had two points out of three in the game of portraiture. Had he been as successful in the third point, technique, as in the other two, he would have ranked as a portrait-painter with Van Dyck.

His children, when done directly from life, were almost as successful as his women. There is some mannerism about the majority of them,— a reminiscence of the way Correggio painted children, — but they are no less childlike and graceful. The fancy for round eyes, a wide smile, and a sharp-pointed chin with a consequent mouselike expression of face prevails. We see it in the charming piece of the "Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick" standing on a hilltop, in the "Muscipula," the "Robinetta," the "Strawberry Girl," the "Cupid as a Link-boy." Presumably Sir Joshua employed this peculiar type to give the shy, frightened, or nervous character of children, and if so he certainly succeeded; but he is more pleasing when he gives the unconscious, self-absorbed character, as in the richly hued "Little Fortune-teller," the "Dead Bird," the "Master Bunbury," the "Age of Innocence," or the little "Miss Bowles" with the dog.

He was very successful, too, with portrait-groups of women with children, two of which Mr. Cole has engraved. The children in the group with Lady Cockburn are arranged, composed — posed, in fact; but how well this is done, and how firm is his grasp of the salient truths of childhood! Then, again, what could be more natural, unconscious, vivacious, than the Duchess of Devonshire, — the "Beautiful Duchess," as she was called,— playing at "hot cockles" with her infant daughter! Both pictures were painted in the painter's mature period, when he had arrived at the height of his power, and both are excellent. They seize upon the incidental, the momentary, which was discoursed against by Sir Joshua in favor of the general and the permanent; but he himself proved more than once that his rules for the "grand style" were subject to many exceptions. He certainly never produced richer, fuller, nobler, more complete works of art than these two portrait-pieces.

His success with portraits of men was perhaps not so great. Occasionally he did a scholar or a general with great truth and power, but he seemed to have more sympathy with women and children. Every Englishman considers the "Lord Heathfield" a masterpiece, and in its original state it was undoubtedly a strong

portrait. Unfortunately, one of its owners saw fit to cut it down to match another Reynolds on an opposite panel in his house, thus destroying the placing of the figure on the canvas; and after that it was repainted somewhat. It is still a noble canvas, in spite of bad treatment, and shows to-day something of the sturdy manhood of the English officer. The "Dr. Johnson" is heavy in touch and drawing, but portrays with much effect the unwieldy frame and the massive features of the irrepressible doctor. Sir Joshua's portraits of himself, of Gibbon, of Goldsmith, are also good pieces of characterization, beside which the flamboyant "Marquis of Rockingham," the too heroic "Keppel," the over-dramatic "Lord Ligonier" will not stand for a moment. Whenever Sir Joshua tried to practise his "old master" theory of generalization he left something to be desired. He had not enough imagination to see the abstract like a Titian or a Paolo Veronese; he needed the concrete before his eyes. When the model was on the platform he did not fail to see truly, and even at times powerfully; but whenever he wandered off to do the heroic or the grand he ran to the superficial.

This is peculiarly true of his efforts in historical painting. The figure-piece was his lifelong aspiration, but never his success. The "Death of Dido," the "Cleopatra," the "Ugolino"—all the figure-pieces he ever did—would not save a name from the dust of oblivion. He painted half a dozen landscapes, but he never pretended to be a landscape-painter. He used trees, hills, and skies well enough as a background, just as he occasionally painted animals after Van Dyck; but they were mere accessory objects. We may dismiss them all, for Sir Joshua was a portrait-painter pure and simple. The limitation is not to his discredit. He could not have chosen a loftier field to work in. In the whole realm of painting there is nothing so difficult to produce as a thoroughly satisfactory portrait. And Sir Joshua produced more than one of them.

Taking him for all and all, Reynolds must be ranked at the head of the English school. He had not Hogarth's originality, nor Gainsborough's delicacy, nor Romney's spirit, nor Lawrence's skill; but in point of view, taste, intelligence, and breadth of accomplishment, he excelled any one of them. Perhaps he had more opportunities than the others, but the manner in which he seized the opportunities showed his ability. Not alone did peer and

duchess rank him as a great painter: his brothers of the craft acknowledged his position, and all through the works of his contemporaries and followers we shall find traces of his influence. He was virtually the founder of the school of English portrait-painters. He led the procession, and public opinion for a hundred years has kept him in the lead.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

THE arms of Gibraltar are a castle with a key hanging to the gate, in allusion to the Rock as the key to the Mediterranean. The portrait of Lord Heathfield has been spoken of as "in all respects one of the finest and most strikingly characteristic Sir Joshua ever painted. The intrepid veteran, firmly grasping in his hand the key of the fortress, stands like the Rock of which he was the defender." The introduction of the key into the general's hand has been praised in the highest terms: "than which imagination cannot conceive anything more ingenious and heroically characteristic."

The background is a glimpse of the Rock with a gun poised on its brow at a steep angle, thus suggesting considerable altitude, and smoke rising from other artillery, forming by its density an admirable setting for the head. The make-up of the background is said to allude to the celebrated defense of the fortress in 1779–83, of which Lord Heathfield, then Lieutenant-General Eliott, was the hero.

The soft tone of the background is grayed delicately, with a fine feeling for atmosphere, and recedes gently, growing warmer and more golden toward the horizon as it meets the distant blue sea, where a touch of far-off mountains is seen. The coat is vermilion — not flamboyant, as a modern would do it, but toned and enriched by glazings of umber. Likewise the gray breeches and waistcoat undergo the same treatment of glazings and scumblings, that give an agreeable quality of richness to the texture. The weather-beaten face is dark reddish, inclined to purplish, in color; and notice that the forehead, the part that is protected by the hat from sun and wind, is lighter. This is an observation of Sir Joshua's as modern as a Sargent. I have heard people remark on seeing this head: "There 's a beef-eater, truly!" little knowing that the hale old veteran was a strict vegetarian all his life, and one to whom the vegetarians point with pride.

The artistic treatment that Sir Joshua gives to ornaments such as the brass key, buttons, and gilt setting of the coat, could not be surpassed for lightness of touch and delicacy. His pictures, being well grounded in chiaroscuro, lend themselves for this reason admirably to engraving.

It was a great privilege to be granted permission to visit the Duke of Devonshire's apartments at Chatsworth and to be given every facility for making an engraving after his beautiful picture by Reynolds of the "Duchess of Devonshire and Child." I had provided myself with a photograph which I supposed was from the original, and which was sold in London as such; but, lo and behold! upon confronting the original I discovered that my photograph was from a copy — one which I subsequently learned was made by the famous Lawrence, to be seen at

Windsor Castle in the collection of the late Queen. There was nothing to be done but to employ a photographer of London to go to Chatsworth, for there was not a photograph to be found in any of the shops of London that was taken from the original. The great Lawrence made very fine originals, but his copies must have been abominable — to judge from this example.

Here is a picture that one might rave over, and one that would repay any lover of art, who finds himself as near Chatsworth as London, to take a run out for a day and see. He would find other pictures and things to engage his admiration as well — the castle and grounds alone being among the most magnificent in the kingdom. In this work we see Reynolds again employing a most original and happy idea. Nothing had ever been done before like it. He breaks away from the staid and courtly dignity brought over from the Continent by Van Dyck, and which, in the hands of followers, had become well-nigh stereotyped, and gives us something new, something really English, that speaks, moreover, the genius of the nation in that the high-born lady could still be the mother, and that it derogated nothing from her dignity to be depicted as such before the eyes of the world.

This canvas was finished in 1786. The personage represented is the same "beautiful duchess" that Sir Joshua painted some years previous as a bride under the title of "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire," she — the daughter of Lady Spencer — having then married the Duke of Devonshire. Here she is depicted as a young mother sporting with her first-born. There is great sweetness, serenity, and matronly charm, not only in the face, but throughout the pose of the body; and as for the infant,— its little foot thrown forward following the action of its hands,— its whole body speaks. Nothing could be more characteristic of a spirited and healthy child. That Reynolds was an original observer of nature this instance may clearly show. It is said that "babes and sucklings were among his tutors. They were more to him than Raphael had ever been. It was one of his maxims that the gestures of children, being all dictated by nature, are graceful." Note the uncertain fitful movement in the hands of the infant. Modern impressionism has not got beyond this. Reynolds does not smudge them, nor give to them any singular contortion, nor leave them unfinished, for this would be to attract the attention of the spectator to them, to the injury of the head, which should command the main interest. It is an error of "modern impressionism" that it purposely blurs or leaves unfinished in a disagreeable stringy condition the hands or fingers, with the idea that by leaving such important parts in an indefinite state the head will gain thereby in value, whereas the very opposite result is attained: the eye is attracted, the attention is aroused, and a spirit of criticism excited — nay, invited.

The figures in this picture are life-sized, and the coloring of the whole is simple and very effective. There is the warm gray sky and the rich deep crimson damask curtain forming the background to the figures, and the sofa is also of this tone of red, but brighter. Then the black satin dress of the lady relieving the white robes of the child — a masterly treatment of two of the most difficult tones to render. The landscape beyond, with the large vase and foliage, is composed of soft warm harmonies of grayish greens and umbers. A picture requires but few colors, but its vital requirement is light and shade; and no one understood this better than Reynolds.

It was out of pure kindness that Earl Spencer not only granted me every facility for making an engraving after his

beautiful work by Sir Joshua of "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire," but, for the advantage of obtaining a good photograph, had this ponderous picture — which taxed the united strength of four men to lift — removed into a favorable light. Only a love of art could have prompted so generous an act of courtesy, and I am happy to record this as but an instance of the kindness I have met with from this noble people.

This work had not been photographed before, save in one instance, and then only in detail, many years ago, when the science had not attained to its present-day perfection. His Lordship offered me the use of the photograph that was then made, but it was of no advantage whatever.

Sir Joshua here depicts the young duchess, life-size, as a bride, shortly after her marriage to the Duke of Devonshire in 1774. The picture is at Althorp House, the country-seat of Earl Spencer, not far from London. It hangs in the magnificent hall above that surrounds the terminal of the central stairway, and is lighted by a central skylight. As a pendant to it, there is hanging not far from it another portrait of the duchess by Gainsborough, full-length, same size, and made at about the same period. It is interesting and instructive to compare the two great masters hanging thus upon the same line. My own preference is given to Reynolds as being the sweeter and gentler manner, not only as to composition, but to color. He demonstrates in his coloring what one of the greatest living portrait-painters is continually preaching to his pupils: that light is golden and not white paint; and who, moreover, advocates, as Sir Joshua did, the constant study of the great works of the great masters, but who again, like Reynolds, acknowledges the wisdom of "unrelaxing study of nature" as well.

The background of this picture is bathed in a golden neutral tone. The bride is in soft white silk of a creamy shade, and a ray of sunlight that filters through the foliage above lightens her face and glances upon the marble balustrade where her hand is lightly resting. From the arm here, as it recedes into the shade, there floats a gauzy veil. The face is suffused with the glow of health, and her coiffure, in which some jewels sparkle, is finished by a reddish or salmon-colored feather. The figure lies well in its atmosphere. It is recorded that sometimes Sir Joshua was the recipient of such compliments as: "What a beautiful head you have made of this lady! It is impossible to add anything to its advantage." To one such he replied with much feeling: "It does not please me yet; there is a sweetness of expression in the original which I have not been able to impart to the portrait, and I cannot therefore think it finished," an expression that must voice the feelings of the vast majority of artists. I know it expresses my own sentiments with respect to my attempts to render his beautiful things into black and white.

The beautiful picture of "Lady Cockburn [pronounced "Coburn"] and her Children," which, until recently, constituted one of the chief ornaments of the National Gallery, and among the British pictures was certainly the most attractive, is now, to the great disappointment of its thousands of admirers, vanished from their sight. This great work — with a number of others of minor importance — was bequeathed to the British nation by Marianna Augusta, Lady Hamilton, eight years ago; but upon a narrow scrutiny of the lady's noble bequest, the heirs discovered a flaw therein of sufficient legal importance to empower them to send deputies of the law to the gallery and take the pictures away. The beautiful lady with her innocents is now said to have passed into the possession of

some moneyed man — said to be an African — at an enormous figure; and thus will this delicate work of art wander about, subject to the caprice and the thousand and one dangers of individual ownership, until, perchance, in some future generation, it may yet again, through the munificence of another noble spirit, find a resting-place under the loving eye of the nation.

This work is painted in the artist's finest manner and at the ripest period of his career — 1775. Here we see Sir Joshua at his best — in his happiest mood. For he loved to paint children, and the beauty of his lady sitter and the importance of the subject must have been an inspiration to him. And it is probable that the artist's own estimate of the work may be gathered from the fact that he painted his name and the date of its completion on the edge of the lady's amber-colored mantle where it is joined by the white fur border. It is scarcely noticeable, forming as it does a kind of ornamental finish. In the engraving it is even less so, since it is not possible on so reduced a scale to give more than a hint of it and yet at the same time suggest by bright, coarse lines the glowing quality of the color of this mantle. It was upon this occasion, while thus adding his name, that Sir Joshua remarked to his sitter: "I shall be handed down to posterity on the hem of your Ladyship's garment." He repeated the compliment when he painted the famous Mrs. Siddons as the "Tragic Muse." The great actress, conceiving it to be a piece of classic embroidery, went a little nearer to examine, when the artist, bowing, said: "I could not lose this opportunity of sending my name to posterity," etc. She smiled in acknowledgment of the compliment. When the picture of Lady Cockburn, upon being finished, "was taken into the exhibition-room," says Cunningham, "such was the sweetness of the conception and the splendor of the coloring that the painters, who were busied with their own performances, acknowledged its beauty by clapping their hands."

The coloring of the whole is glowing and mellow; the curtain behind the figures — drawn partly aside and disclosing a peep of landscape with warm gray clouds — is a rich maroon in tone, and floats gently down into the deep, soft tones of the background shades, that give relief to the delicious peach-colored garment of the boy, who is partly kneeling on his mother's lap, and to the still more delightful amber-colored mantle of the mother, which falls over her knees, and which glows as though from some hidden warmth of its own. The quality of the tone of the white fur which borders this mantle, and melts into the exquisite white about the mother's breast, and this again into the pearly and rosy tints of the flesh, is quite indescribable from the way it is all bound together in one harmonious fusion. A pronounced note of color, and one which serves to give value to the rest, is that of the parrot,— or more properly macaw,— the upper portion of which is a red and the lower blue, relieved against the warm gray tones of the marble column behind.

This macaw, by the way, was often painted by Sir Joshua and introduced into his portrait-subjects. Northcote, a pupil and biographer of Reynolds, tells us how the bird used to fly in fury at the picture Northcote painted of the housemaid who had to clean after the bird, and between whom and it no love was lost. Sir Joshua frequently repeated the experiment, putting the picture down where the bird was, who always flew at it and attacked it with his beak.

Upon the subject of coloring, Sir Joshua, it is said, often took pleasure in quoting the remark of a friend, namely, "that a picture should have a richness in its texture, as if the colors were composed of

cream or cheese"; perhaps he would not have objected to some luscious fruit juices being added as well. Ruskin deems Reynolds one of the "seven supreme colorists of the world," the other six being Titian, Giorgione, Correggio, Tintoret, Veronese, and Turner. He also says of him: "Considered as a painter of individuality in the human form and mind, I think him, even as it is, the prince of portrait-painters. Titian painted nobler pictures, and Van Dyck had nobler subjects; but neither of them entered so subtly as Sir Joshua did into the minor varieties of human heart and temper." The figures in this picture are life-sized, and the canvas, which is in excellent preservation, measures four feet six inches high by three feet seven and a half inches wide. T. C.

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

CHAPTER III

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

(1727–1788)

THE contrast between Reynolds and Gainsborough is perhaps not so sharply marked as biographers and critics would have us believe. The one was not wholly a creature of training, nor the other wholly a spontaneous manifestation of genius; and while it may make a striking antithesis to say that Sir Joshua painted by the book, and Gainsborough by the look, it also makes a somewhat misleading statement.

Both of them learned what they could from past art. Reynolds was the better student, and had greater opportunities; but Gainsborough took whatever came within his grasp, and his art shows nearly as many Continental influences as that of Sir Joshua. He was more self-absorbed, more individual in view, and hence more original; but originality, in the sense of throwing aside all traditions and painting only what one sees in nature, was not characteristic of Gainsborough, or of any other artist in history. Painters "go to nature" after they have found out how other painters traveled there before them. The study on their own account which follows enables them to recombine and to improve upon their predecessors; and in this Sir Joshua was quite as clever as Gainsborough. The real difference between the painters was one of temperament. Their material, subjects, training, and social *milieu* were substantially the same; it was the personal equation that made the variation in what was produced.

Gainsborough, like Reynolds, was a country boy, having been born at Sudbury in 1727. The father was a merchant dealing in cloths, and the mother, we are told, had the womanly accomplishment of flower-painting. These two facts are usually recited in

Gainsborough biographies, presumably to suggest that the boy "took after" his mother rather than after his father; but when and how his pictorial inclination made itself manifest are not known. There are stories told of his boyish wanderings in Suffolk woodlands, his fondness for nature, his marvelous sketches of landscapes, and his portrait of a man stealing apples; but the stories have the infant-prodigy smack about them, and the sketches cannot to-day be positively identified. It appears that at fifteen he had converted his family to a belief in his genius, and he was sent off to London to study painting. Here he was fortunate in making the acquaintance of Gravelot, the French illustrator and engraver, whose pupil he became; and for one year of his life he was under a master who at least knew drawing.

And Gravelot's influence upon the pupil must have been more important than we are usually given to understand. Any one who studies Gainsborough's figures cannot but be impressed with a jauntiness of air, a turn of head, a smallness of hands and feet, a drawing of costume, and a posing of figures, that strongly suggest an Englishman following Watteau. Again, one is struck in some of Gainsborough's landscapes with a feathery, tufty foliage, the outer branches often being edged like a bird's wing. That is another reminder of Watteau. It has been explained that this is characteristic of the Rubens landscape, and that Gainsborough got it from that master; but it should be explained further that he probably got it from Rubens at second hand through Watteau, who based his landscape upon that of the great Fleming. All through Gainsborough's art there is a strain that is more French than Dutch or Flemish, more like Watteau than like Lely or Van Dyck; and this strain probably came to him through Gravelot, who inherited some of the Watteau traditions.

There was a year with Gravelot, and then Gainsborough went to the St. Martin's Lane Academy, to study under Hayman. It is said that he remained at this academy three years, though what he could have learned there one is at a loss to conjecture. Hayman was neither draftsman nor colorist; and after Gravelot, his pupil must have found him as water unto wine. But there is small record of Gainsborough's outside movements during these three years, and what he picked up in instruction no one knows. Reynolds said that he learned much by studying and copying Teniers, Rubens, and Van Dyck; but whether this was done as a man or

THE SISTERS—MRS. SHERIDAN AND MRS. TICKELL, BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

DULWICH GALLERY.

as a boy we are not informed. As for his pictures of this period, it is impossible to identify them with certainty, if, indeed, there are any extant.[1]

After leaving the St. Martin's Lane Academy, he seems for a few months to have set up a studio of his own; but evidently success was not his, for at nineteen he had returned to Sudbury. Here he speedily married a young woman named Margaret Burr, who had an amiable disposition and two hundred pounds a year. The young couple moved to Ipswich, where Philip Thicknesse lent a protecting wing, and where Gainsborough executed some portraits for which he received moderate sums, some country-life pictures which sold for next to nothing, and a number of landscapes which he could not sell at all. In 1760 he went to Bath, where he soon had a handsome patronage at fashionable prices. His sitters spread his fame, and from Bath he began sending pictures to London for exhibition at the Society of Artists. He sent to the Society for seven years, and to the Royal Academy (of which he was an original member) from 1769 to 1772.

Gainsborough finally outgrew Bath; and in 1773 he went up to town, took a house in Pall Mall, and passed the rest of his life there. The king sent for him shortly after his arrival, and with royal patronage he flourished, and became the formidable rival of Sir Joshua. Nobility sat to him; the town knew him; money came to him freely; and, all told, his latter days were filled with success. He was quite content with London, and, aside from a tour to the Lake District in 1783, he never wandered from home, never went out of England. His death from cancer, superinduced by a cold caught while attending the trial of Warren Hastings, occurred August 2, 1788. He was buried at Kew, and Burke, Sheridan, Reynolds, and other celebrities stood by the grave, bearing witness to the qualities of the man and the genius of the painter.

There is little in Gainsborough's life that seems out of the normal. His career was perhaps more commonplace in its lack of incident than that of Reynolds; for he mingled less with the world, and was hardly a social character at all. A sensitive man, a little shy, and prone to the melancholy view, he rather shrank from the mob, and spent almost all of his life in the English country. His wife, with whom he lived happily, a chum of a musician, for he had

[1] There are "a pair of portraits in pencil" in the National Gallery of Ireland which Sir Walter Armstrong, the director of the gallery, believes to be genuine Gainsborough drawings.

a passion for music, the farm-house people, with whom he always found himself at home, were more congenial to him than nobilities or celebrities. When success brought him to London, he did not join "The Club" and enter the society of the period, though he occasionally dined with Burke, Sheridan, Beaumont, and the other gay ones. He was diffident and easily embarrassed. Reynolds called upon him, but he never returned the courtesy, and a coolness sprang up between the two painters that lasted through life. When Gainsborough was on his death-bed he sent for Sir Joshua, and they were reconciled. Very touching is the account of this scene left us by Sir Joshua, and very handsome was his after-tribute to the genius of Gainsborough.

The tribute was all the more gracious because the men were rivals, and because they were naturally ill fitted to comprehend each other. Sir Joshua had a philosophy that summed up the factors of life and art, and established certain principles; he was a character. Gainsborough had a sensitive disposition, responding ever and always to impulse; he was a temperament. Where the one man was open to conviction, the other was open only to impression. Sir Joshua could analyze, theorize, and discourse, proving himself in the right by reason and precedent; but this was not his rival's method of attaining truth. Analysis bothered Gainsborough. Doubtless he had his theories, but he never talked them at the Royal Academy, or painted them in any recognizable form. What he could see he comprehended acutely, but what he had to reason out was not so well grasped. Argument meant little to him, and he was too impatient for principles. Things were accepted as they appeared, without much philosophizing about the whys and the wherefores. And this peculiar quality of mind seemed to dictate his likes and dislikes. Men and books interested him but slightly; they appealed to the reflective side of his intelligence, and found little response; but he was devoted to trees, hills, skies, animals, handsome women and children, because they appealed to his sense of form and color.

Gainsborough's pictures make up his only autobiography, and all of them are temperamental rather than philosophical, reflective of moods or states of feeling rather than intellectual expositions of abstract fact. An individuality full of delicate feeling, sensitive to things graceful and charming, and tinged by a strain of romantic melancholy, shows in the majority of his canvases. On the surface

his art is frequently vivacious, sprightly, dashing; but underneath flows almost always a current of sadness inherent in the man. How many handsome women he painted, with heads tossed coquettishly on one side, with lively pose of figure, and soubrette turn of hand and foot! They all smile, but there is something behind the smile that seems to mock at gaiety. His country children have the same strain about them. They are pensive, supersensitive, grown old in youth. They stand or sit, quietly gazing at you; and though they are healthy-looking enough, they have little of the romp, the play of animal spirits, the thoughtlessness, of children. Perhaps, as has been suggested, the idea of children in landscape came to him from Dutch art; but how radical is the difference in spirit! The Dutch children are strong of body, light of mind, quite unconscious; but the Gainsborough children have known grief, and their gaiety has been nipped by an early frost.

One can trace this feeling in Gainsborough's portraits of men, and, with less emphasis perhaps, in his landscapes. Yet look at his gray clouds which are always drifting across the sky, his deep-brown trees, wind-swept fields, dusky woods. How somber they are! The model for these landscapes came from the over-seas art, and their color was perhaps not wholly an expression of Gainsborough's feeling; but is it not odd that he should have chosen this model instead of the bright golden sky of Italy, as painted by Wilson? Was it not because the solemn sadness of Ruysdael—one of the first masters to influence him—appealed to his temperament?

All through the pictures of Gainsborough, in spite of the Watteau-like liveliness of them, one can feel this chord of melancholy. The commonest faces grew romantic under it, the dullest summer landscape took on a new mystery because of it. Sometimes, indeed, its presence harmed more than it helped by producing attenuation of character. Gainsborough often trenched upon the outermost confines of sentiment by over-refinement; and, for that matter, he led all the old English painters in delicacy of feeling. There was never anything coarse, rugged, or brutally strong about him. The themes of Hogarth were as repulsive to him as to Reynolds; and the historic, the tragic, were beyond him. He could never produce the classic or the dramatic. His whole nature was idyllic rather than epic, devoted to the contemplative rather than the active. A fair lady lost in thought or a fair landscape grown

hazy under gray clouds was quite to his mood. And to refine and poetize such a theme, to receive and record an impression about it, was his delight. Of course the impression was tinctured by the painter's individuality. That constitutes its great charm. A poetic point of view is not given to every painter, and Gainsborough's view lost none of its poetry because of there being a highly sensitive, slightly morbid personality behind it.

Gainsborough's subjects fall easily into three classes: first, landscapes with rustic figures; secondly, rustic figures with landscapes; and thirdly, portraits. His landscapes attracted but little notice. In his day people were indifferent to skies, trees, meadows, and hills; and Wilson, thirteen years his senior, had starved at painting them. When Gainsborough died, most of the streams and woodlands he had put upon canvas were found in his house. They had never sold, and their creation had been with the painter a labor of love. It is impossible to say when they were painted, for he seldom, if ever, signed or dated pictures. Probably his first efforts were his woodland sketches about Sudbury, and probably, again, his first lessons in art came from studying Dutch pictures in the East-England country. Certainly Gainsborough tells us in his pictures that he knew the work of Ruysdael, Wynants, and perhaps Hobbema. The wood scene in the National Gallery, showing Cornard village, sometimes called "Gainsborough's Forest," may be rightly enough named as regards the locality and the subject but it is Ruysdael's palette, brush, and method. The trees, with their brown under-basing and sage-green overlaying, the thin gray clouds, the unsubstantial earth, the spotty lights, all show an English paraphrase of the Dutchman.

If this picture can be taken as an example of early work, and the "Watering Place," in the same gallery, as an example of late work, then it may be said that Gainsborough outgrew the Dutch, outgrew Rubens and Watteau, and finally produced a landscape that was quite his own. The "Watering Place," to be sure, shows the broom-like, bird-wing foliage of Watteau, together with the brown tree and the bituminous shadow which were never true of English or any other watering-places; but it also shows a broad sweep, a largeness of conception and treatment, a majestic force in earth, tree, cloud, and sky, such as no English painter had ever produced before him. Something of the same view and treatment is shown in a landscape in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy; and there is a landscape with dogs and a fox, belonging

to Lord Rosebery, that is impatient and sketchy, but full of vigor and comprehensive knowledge. Gainsborough did not always see nature so largely or paint its appearance so powerfully. He was frequently smooth, thin, and somewhat "sweet" in skies, lights, and trees. This was apparently his early manner, when he was following Ruysdael. Later, when he seemed to be following Watteau, his composition was less formal, the brush was freer, and the coloring much deeper and warmer. One could wish that in all his landscapes there were less of slate-gray and old-mahogany coloring, but he came at a period when landscape art was an arbitrary utterance, and, in measure, he followed tradition.

In all his landscapes he was fond of putting small figures, horses, carts, cattle, ponds, broken tree-trunks, using them for spots of color or light. When these small objects were merely accessories of light or color they were kept subordinate to the landscape; but when they were enlarged the landscape was kept down, and the objects became the leading features. Thus was made up Gainsborough's second class of pictures — rustic figures with landscape. With these themes he was often hasty and sketchy in his foliage, skies, and grounds, feeling undoubtedly that the interest was centered in the figures, and should be maintained there. The "Cottage Girl," the "Girl with Cat," the "Girl with Pitcher," the "Girl Feeding Pigs," the "Dogs Fighting," the "Donkey Race," are illustrations of this genre. They were not highly valued in the painter's time, but recently it has been discovered that they are wonderful studies from nature; that while Reynolds painted the aristocratic child, Gainsborough did the farmer's child; and that the latter was the more genuine, because coming more directly from the soil. But there is small reason in the argument. Gainsborough's children have more florid complexions and less elegant garments than Sir Joshua's, but they are as much warped by the painter's subjective nature as Sir Joshua's were by his regard for Correggio's way of depicting childhood. His real nature-studies were his cottages, carts, and particularly his animals. Cattle, horses, sheep he did not care too much for, painting them largely as spots of color; but a dog, a fox, or a donkey he epitomized oftentimes in a most striking manner. The dog in the "Perdita Robinson" portrait is a most remarkable piece of vitality, and the donkeys in the "Donkeys in a Storm" at Glasgow have characterization in high degree.

But after all praise has been given to Gainsborough's land-

scapes,—and they are worthy of praise,—the fact remains that his reputation was made, and still hangs, upon his portraits. As might be surmised from his disposition, he worked better with women and children for sitters than with men. The painter's sentiment seemed to carry more effectively when shown in the face of a "Mrs. Graham" than when pictured in the face of a "Dr. Johnson" or an "Admiral Vernon." Some trace of effeminacy lingers in almost all of his men. His "Pitt" will not compare with Hoppner's for sturdy force; the "Parish Clerk," in the National Gallery, is prettified; the "Admiral Rodney" is unsympathetic and perfunctory; and only one of his many portraits in the National Portrait Gallery can be called satisfactory. One wonders if Gainsborough ever painted a man's portrait that possessed the force of Reynolds's "Lord Heathfield." After all, Sir Joshua had an intellectual stamina which he instilled into his characters, whereas Gainsborough had merely a winning personality.

But this very shortcoming in his men's portraits proved an excellence in his portraits of women. The "Mrs. Siddons," hanging near the "Parish Clerk," is very like the latter work in conception and treatment; but in the former the delicacy and softness are the very essence of the tragic queen when off the stage and once more a woman. And what a charm there is about the beautiful "Mrs. Graham"! Not proud or haughty like a Van Dyck duchess; yet what a refined, delicate creature she is, with that girlish throat and those small, taper hands and feet! Vivacious and spirited in pose, she is nevertheless constrained to quietude, dignified, even saddened, by that Gainsborough strain of melancholy. The castle wall, the deep glen at the left, the loneliness of the background, add to the romance of the face, until one might fancy her, for all her jauntiness of air, the subject of some great tragedy. No wonder that when the beautiful lady died, her husband could not bear to look at the wistful, tender face, and walled up the picture in his house, where it was forgotten, and hung in darkness for fifty years, until a new proprietor, making alterations, brought it once more to light. The "Mrs. David Kinloch," the "Lady Eden," the "Lady Ennis," the "Lady Margaret Fordyce," the "Ladies Erne and Dillon," the "Duchess of Cumberland," the "Duchess of Devonshire," at Althorp, all have rather long faces and pointed chins, and they all wear the Mona-Lisa smile, deepened and saddened to pathetic loveliness. Were they

all so sad in reality, or did they only appear so as seen through Gainsborough's temperament? The Duchess of Devonshire was painted by both Reynolds and Gainsborough; but how differently each saw her! To Reynolds she was gay, and somewhat noisy in the bargain; but to Gainsborough she was shy and lonely, leaning romantically against a column, with downcast eyes, and a face sicklied over with pensiveness.

Occasionally he painted portraits where the strain is less obvious, as, for examples, the "Perdita Robinson" and the "Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Tickell" at Dulwich; but in the majority of his pictures, whatever the subjects, we find the temperament tincturing the reality. A man so cabined, cribbed, confined within himself as Gainsborough could not be objective. He drew from the only source at his disposal, and that source chiefly himself. He painted many "whole-lengths" of noble-looking ladies standing in landscape; and whether or not they were good likenesses cannot now be determined. As we see them to-day, they are at least beautiful pictures. The character may be romanced, but the tale told is not the less poetic; the facts may be juggled with, but the form is not less graceful nor the color less charming.

Possessed as Gainsborough was of the true artistic temperament, he was not a thoroughly trained craftsman any more than his contemporaries. He struggled with insufficient knowledge all his life. The composition of a group always worried him, but he could pose a single figure, and arrange the accessories very cleverly. He knew considerable about drawing, but not enough to be a complete master of it. It is often apparent in his pictures that he did not know how an object should be presented by line, and that he sought, by diverting the attention to color and texture, to give the appearance of reality in another way. He did this effectively, for he was more of a painter than a draftsman; and if he did not paint in patches, like Manet, he at least tried to reproduce the exact values of the tones. The tone as a substitute for line was a makeshift, but it had its advantages, not unforeseen by the painter, of giving elasticity and mobility to the figure; and it is not a matter of regret that he failed to inclose his figures in a rim or an outline. Better by far a rambling "Musidora" by Gainsborough than an impossible, line-bound "Helen" by David.

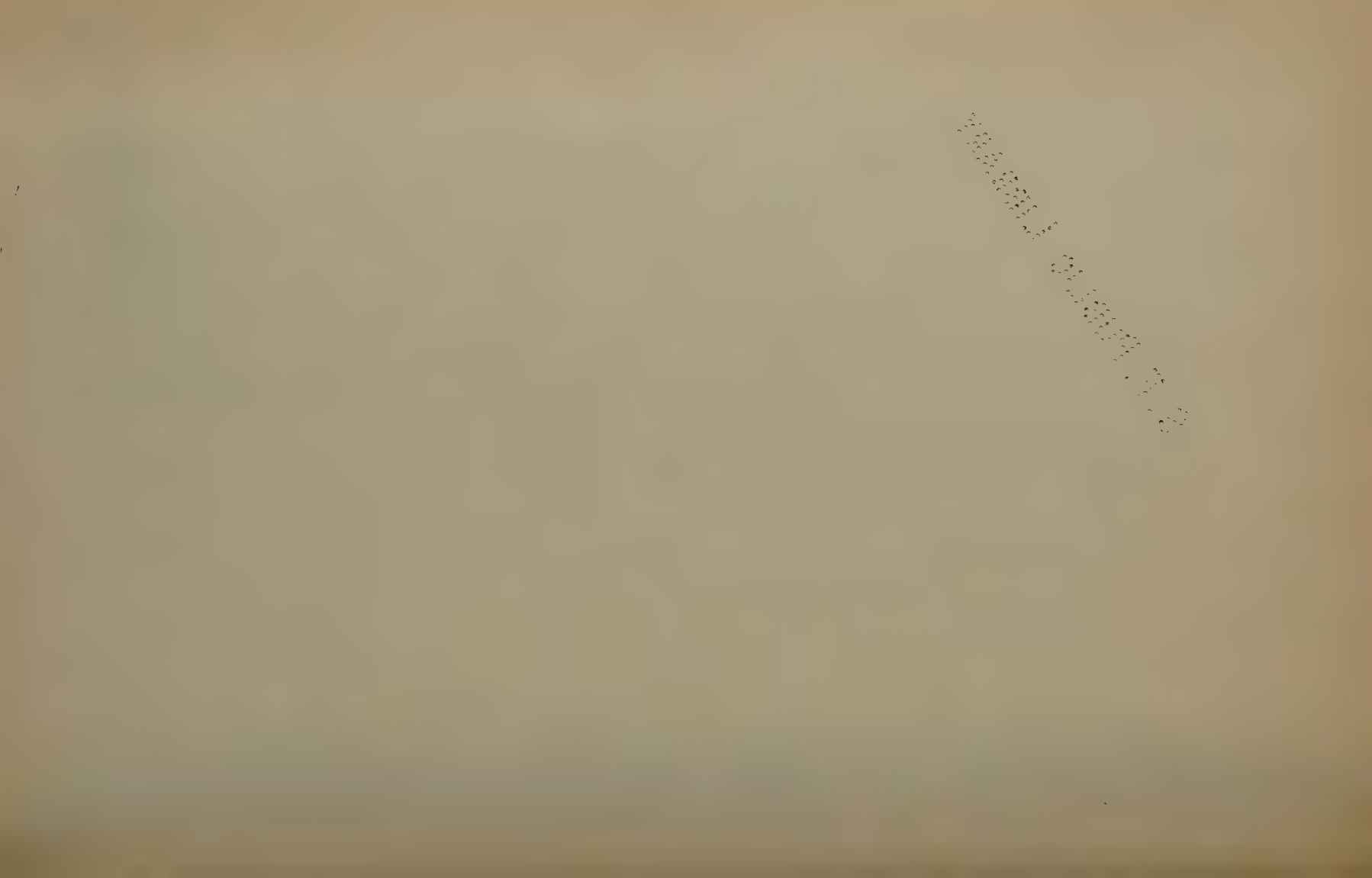
His handling is one of his oddities, and is certainly original enough, since no other master ever handled in just the same way.

Rubens wrote with the brush as easily and as smoothly as a writing-master with the pen; Rembrandt modeled in paint, oftentimes producing surfaces in relief; Reynolds kneaded and thumbed; but Gainsborough streaked, scratched, and rubbed, working with a long-handled brush, and striving to gain an under-surface effect. Close to view, such scratching and hatching as one sees in the hair of the "Mrs. Siddons" seems quite unnecessary; but at the proper distance this work reveals the lightness and fluffiness of the hair most strikingly. A similar effect was frequently sought for in his flesh-tones. He did not like the hard, shining surface, though he sometimes painted it; and in his faces he was usually striving for the depth and transparent quality of the flesh rather than for its external appearance. He was not at ease with the full brush, though such landscapes as the "Watering Place" offer a contradiction to the statement. His touch was usually smooth and swift enough, but thin and not always certain. Where Reynolds hesitated, Gainsborough was perhaps too hasty, painting with more decision than precision, all of which would tell us, even if we did not know it from contemporary testimony, that he was an impatient, impulsive man, working by fits and starts with much energy, and putting more of the artist's mood in his work than the brushman's skill.

Perhaps the greatest charm of Gainsborough's painting was his color. Mr. Ruskin has said he was "the greatest colorist since Rubens," which, meaning much or meaning little, is too general a statement to be illuminating. Compared with his contemporaries, he was individual and distinguished in his color—a painter following his own idea of harmony and placing little reliance upon what others had taught and done before him, save in the landscape. In fact, so independent was he that he was disposed to place himself in opposition to Reynolds in the matter of pleasing color arrangements; and instead of using the warm academic hues, he preferred the cool tints of gray, yellow, and blue. Much has been made of Reynolds's dictum about the inexpediency of cool colors in the body of a picture, and it has been said that Gainsborough painted his Van Dyck-like "Blue Boy" to disprove the dictum. Whether the Reynolds rule was applied to the picture, or the picture to the rule, the "Blue Boy" comes nearer proving Reynolds in the right than Gainsborough. The picture is not a blue picture in the sense of possessing a blue *enveloppe*. It is simply a mass of dark blue placed in a warm brown setting, and is about as disappointing in color as

PORTRAIT OF MRS. SIDDONS, BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.



anything Gainsborough ever painted. The blues in the "Parish Clerk" and the "Mrs. Siddons" are perhaps more pleasing, though neither picture gains by their use. The large Dulwich picture is much better; and very fine in coloring are such portraits as the "Elder Daughter of George III" at Kensington, the "Duchess of Cumberland" at Windsor, and, again, the "Mrs. Graham" at Edinburgh. Cream whites, dull reds and pinks, saffron yellows, silver grays—pale, cool notes—he could arrange in most charming combinations. Here he relied almost entirely upon his sensitive eye, and the result was a harmony quite his own. Van Dyck and Reynolds may have taught him something about aristocracy of pose and bearing, but they taught him nothing about color. It was Gainsborough's most original quality, and was most appropriate, in fact quite complementary, to that shade of melancholy which dominated his finest work. His soft tones seem to harmonize with the pathos of sad faces, where lively or severe coloring would have been out of place and disturbing.

Again we come back to a primary statement that Gainsborough was a temperament instead of a rule, a person of feeling rather than an erudite craftsman. In art, temperament is perhaps above character, as more spontaneous: but temperament in the ascendancy usually means limitation, and Gainsborough was not a versatile man. True, he did many subjects—and so did Corot, the Frenchman; but the peculiar sentiment of the painter is apparent in almost every one of them. Nor would we have it otherwise. One touch of true feeling is worth a whole gallery of academic elegance. Reynolds, who was somewhat different from Gainsborough in this respect, seemed to appreciate in his contemporary what he himself could lay less claim to; and it was perhaps not presidential condescension or funereal eulogy that led him to say of the dead painter: "If ever this nation should produce genius sufficient to acquire to us the honorable distinction of an English school, the name of Gainsborough will be transmitted to posterity, in the history of the art, among the very first of that rising name."

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

THE HON. MRS. GRAHAM, the daughter of Lord Cathcart, born in 1757, was married in 1774, at the age of seventeen, to Thomas Graham of Balgowan, and died in 1791, after seventeen years of married happiness. Her husband, who loved her passionately, afterward sought distraction from his grief by engaging in the army, and, greatly distinguishing himself in the Peninsular Wars, rose to the peerage, becoming Lord Lynedoch, and died at the age of ninety-five years, never having married again. He left the lovely portrait of his young wife immured in his house, as he had caused it to be more than fifty years before, and it was discovered only when some alterations were being carried out for another proprietor. The picture (see frontispiece) was painted in 1775–76, on the couple's return from their wedding tour on the Continent.

Think of this beautiful work of art, of ineffable sweetness and delicacy, being walled up for more than half a century, neglected, and finally—"out of sight, out of mind"—completely forgotten! abandoned to the deteriorating influence of darkness, damp, and dust, and to the spiders and other vermin to befoul with cobwebs and dirt! I look at it with amazement and thankfulness that it has escaped irreparable injury, and been handed down to us in, one might almost say, all its pristine freshness and richness. I wonder at the preservation of the flesh-tints, with their pure, pearly shades modulating so tenderly into warm and pinkish flushes in the broad planes of light that seem to palpitate with subtile undulations; and the rosy lips, with all that breadth and fullness of modeling about the features that fill you with rapture as you gaze! I wonder, above all, that its proprietor should have had the temerity to bury so live a thing!

The distinction and refinement of this work are recognized at a glance, surrounded as it is, in its place in the National Gallery at Edinburgh, by its hale and red-faced neighbors. It would be impossible to describe its fine scheme of coloring, balanced so delicately between warm and cool tones. It is evening. The wooded landscape of the valley below, rich and deep, lustrous and cool, and revealing upon close inspection greenish, bluish, and russet tinges, is penetrated with a hushed mystery and repose; its gloom is profound and impressive. Above, the sky is heavy with a ponderous blue-gray cloud which breaks toward the horizon, where are touches of golden light behind the trees. The lady leans slightly against the base of a couple of fluted columns of a warm dense gray tone. How gently the light steals upward and along the foremost one, and brightens and dies away! The figure is clad in a bodice of silver-gray satin, with an edging of peaked lace enframing the bosom. The polonaise is of the same satin, but the underskirt is a crimson-rose in color. In the hand is a grayish-white ostrich-plume. The hat is silver-gray adorned with the same-colored feathers, and the hair is very much of the tone of the hat, being powdered gray. Note the prevalence of cool tones. But how happily and with what art all these are offset by the distribution of the warm tones of the high lights which mount up with telling force in the radiance of the face and bosom! He demonstrates the truth of Sir Joshua's dictum that "the masses of light in a picture should be always of a warm and

mellow color, and the cold colors used only to support and set off these warm colors." But he gives it a new interpretation by the charm of the prevailing sheet of soft, silvery atmosphere that binds all and imparts to the ensemble a soothing, restful quality, so that you feel the truth of what has been said of Gainsborough, that "no artist was ever at once more new, more natural, and more English." The handling in this magnificent example of Gainsborough's genius is so full, so large — embracing so much and suggesting still more — that to go into a description of its details would be analogous somewhat to endeavoring to hum over a symphony, which is a subtly blended tissue of sound only possible to catch in a few tag-ends of tunes hanging out therefrom; yet it swims in the mind, and you can think it, but are tantalized by your impotency to give it utterance. It is interesting to note a detail, such as the feathers of the hat, for instance, that soften with bluish and pearly touches so deftly from the force of the warm high light into the atmospheric coolness of the sky. If you look into it, you see it handled with great dexterity and vigor; each touch characteristic of some large form; no mean anxiety about details, but subordination to the face being the rule, as throughout the whole. Nothing finer or more fluent in treatment could be imagined than the arm, which is veiled by a flouncing of lace, the same in tone as the silver-gray polonaise, showing the warm color of the flesh through it. And note as well the texture of the crisp folds of the satin, and the plaiting of the wine-colored skirt. The brushing here is most spirited, and designed to offset the smoothness of the flesh, where the surface is exquisite and the tints blended and caressed with unsurpassed delicacy and finesse. It is smoothly painted in general, and with a moderately full impasto.

The canvas measures seven feet nine inches high by five feet wide, and the figure is life-sized. The morning is the best time for seeing it, for the reason that, as it is covered with glass, there are then fewer reflections from the pictures of the opposite wall.

The double portrait of "Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Tickell" is at the Dulwich Gallery, and forms one of the most important if not the chief attraction there. It does not equal for purity and coolness of tint the wonderful "Mrs. Graham" at Edinburgh, though perhaps it would be juster to say it is in another vein of thought. It is emphatically another key; and to be charmed with one more than with the other may be a matter of taste. Rarely, if ever, does the true artist get his art down to a system whereby he can, if he choose, repeat a certain color-scheme; for often he never knows how he arrived at certain effects. In this picture of the two ladies the ensemble is decidedly warm. The dress of Mrs. Tickell, who is seated on the bank with the music-sheet on her lap, is a pleasing shade of ocher, while that of her sister is blue; but the blue is so warm as to make it doubtful whether it be not green, so balanced is it between the two colors, and its high lights approach in tone those of the other dress; while many of the shades in the ocher dress have cool passages that make these two bits of drapery marry delightfully. Then the wooded background, of a rich, deep tone, becoming lighter and more greenish as the foliage blends into the mellow gray sky, makes a simple and effective setting for this charming bit of color. The figures are the size of life.

This lovely couple, who were devotedly attached to each other, were famous vocalists in their generation, and were daughters of Thomas Linley, a musician of Bath, their native place, where, as well as in London, in Gainsborough's day, they contributed to the refinement and elevation of the times, taking leading parts in

the popular concerts and oratorios. There is a tradition that the music resting upon the lap of Mrs. Tickell is the score and words of a song of spring written by her husband, the music by her father, Mr. Linley, which was once celebrated by the wonderful singing of the two sisters. Mrs. Sheridan, the one looking off pensively, is acknowledged to have been a model of personal beauty, and was the original of Sir Joshua's "St. Cecilia." It is said that no woman of her time possessed in larger measure beauty, talent, and virtue. Before her marriage she was surrounded with lovers, among them a certain miserly Wiltshire squire, who would have married her, but she refused him; and he not only resigned himself to his disappointment, but assumed the responsibility of breaking off the match, and settled three thousand pounds on her as an indemnity for the breach of covenant. It is not said that she refused the miser's money. She was the more famous of the two sisters.

Gainsborough, who was an enthusiast in music, evidently had here a subject after his own heart. It is easy to imagine that the central idea he had in view was to show "the mind and music breathing from the face." That lovely creature, Mrs. Tickell, looking out of the picture straight at you with dark eyes and an intelligent fervor of countenance and mien, her body erect and full of spirit — she seems all mind! The other, gently reclining against the bank, lost in sweet reveries, her arms resting on the long-necked guitar, her head averted looking off afar, as though musing upon heavenly themes and melodies — does she not seem wrapped in the spirit of music?

Sir Joshua Reynolds, in pronouncing upon the merits of Gainsborough's works, says: "It is difficult to determine whether his portraits were most admirable for exact truth of resemblance, or his landscapes for portrait-like representation of nature." Neither of which statements, though doubtless intended as marked praise, is complimentary in the highest sense to the genius of his great contemporary; rather would this judgment lower our creative artist to the level of the commonplace topographer; for surely the natural features in a great work of art, whether of portraiture or landscape, are the least accounted merits in the category of its excellences. It was not the mere "portrait-like representation of nature" that was the summit of Gainsborough's achievement in landscape; that, indeed, was but the elemental part of his art — the pulsation of the stretched string, as it were, that gives the pleasure of sweet sound before yet the musician has enhanced this pleasure by concords and combinations — the basis on which his poetic spirit sought to rear a higher delight. For Gainsborough was a poet. Isolated somewhat from his contemporaries, like "a moody child and wildly wise," he wandered alone the fields and woods, communing with nature, and to his loving eye nature enhanced her beauty. Beauty was his aspiration and pursuit; and it was not so much nature as the expression of nature that he valued and endeavored to record. Much that he had to say in his landscapes was conventional, and given, of course, in the language of his time; but finally, in his canvas of the "Watering Place," he comes out with something original, which seems like a happy hit, so pronounced does this landscape stand forth from the bulk of what he chose to term his "labors of love." In this he conveys a larger sense by simpler means. He masses his trees in a grander manner; drops the prosiness of small forms and indications of leaves, and aims at their spirit and splendor; is less elaborate, but at the same time fuller and more fluent; and is concerned less with what is than what seems to be, as in the deep shade of the middle distance

THE WATERING PLACE, BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

which envelops moving forms — a boy beside a horse, and some cows. Here the gleam of light upon the foreground cattle, and the bright light of the sunset in the sky above the hills, render them well-nigh indistinct. The light enters the artist's eyes and causes these forms to swim in mystery. It is in the sky, however, that he takes a leap forward and anticipates Constable. Nothing surely could be finer for atmospheric depth, looseness, and freedom. The purple clouds float in the apple-green and yellow azure, and all is bathed in the cool evening air. This painting was declared at the time to be "by far the finest landscape ever painted in England, and equal to the great masters"; but it is greater than the great masters, because the problems in it are such as had not been arrived at before Gainsborough's time. It seems to me that the artist must have used a dark mirror in studying his effect, the shadows are so broad and simple. The gloom is impressive, and the robust trees are fine in sentiment; their gnarled trunks and branches are suggestive of weird shapes. It is a place for fairies, and we can imagine the group of children to the left telling fairy-tales. The dimensions of the canvas are four feet ten inches high by five feet eleven inches wide. It is under glass.

Gainsborough declared he painted portraits only for money, but landscapes from love, while he was a musician because he could n't help it. But if in the first instance love was not the impelling force, then possibly the competitive spirit in him, or necessity, or a high sense of duty to his sitter, forced him to the accomplishment of greater deeds in his wonderful faces than in his landscapes — faces that hold us with a fascination more charming than even those of Raphael, and which proclaim their author as belonging to those gifted few who fulfil the poet's requirement:

> He must be musical, tremulous, impressional,
> Alive to gentle influence of landscape and of sky,
> And tender to the spirit-touch of man's and maiden's eye.

There is more in Gainsborough's portraits than that "most admirable" quality of "exact truth of resemblance" so much praised by Sir Joshua. There is an animated breath-of-life air, a pathos and emotional feeling, and a poetic charm — the "spirit-touch," in short — by which they live in the memory, unfading, like the faces of those we cherish most. He did not do these things for money merely. Surely no! That was only one of his impulsive utterances, or designed probably to accentuate how he felt about landscape.

The incident recorded of his failure with the portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire might serve to demonstrate how free Gainsborough was from anything of a sordid money-getting nature; for while painting the mouth, and in despair of being able to do justice to the beauty of the original, he obliterated what he had done with a stroke of his brush, saying: "Her Grace is too hard for me!" The picture is said to have been afterward destroyed, though all who saw it thought it exquisitely lovely. How different this is from the policy of the worldly artist, who, contrary to admitting that anything in this world is too hard, is forever boasting of his abilities!

Gainsborough had difficulties also with the portrait of Mrs. Siddons, for it seems the tip of her nose baffled his draftsmanship, and he is said, while painting it, to have exclaimed impatiently: "Damn the nose, there 's no end to it!" She was twenty-nine years old when this was painted, and it is one of Gainsborough's late portraits, being completed in 1784, four years before his death. Reynolds painted her, the year previous, as the "Tragic Muse." The figure is life-sized, and the canvas measures four feet one

and a half inches high by three feet three inches wide. The coloring is dominated by the strong note of blue in the sash that goes about the shoulders and the waist, and falls down the side in ribbons somewhat strident in color. The dress also is a shade of blue, but softer and more agreeable in tone, being striped with blue lines upon a pearly ground. The shawl is buff-colored, and passes about the arm behind, reappearing beneath the further hand and below the muff, which is brown. The curtain of the background is a deep red, softened with umber tones as it recedes into the deeper shades and becomes dark and cool. The hat is rich and very finely treated in its breadth and tender quality of black, and enhances the pearly and rosy tones of the flesh, giving it freshness and brilliancy; and this, again, in the quality of its texture, gains still more in value and interest by the treatment given to the powdered hair. The thin white tulle over the bosom, revealing the tone of the flesh beneath, softens the approach of the blue of the sash, and performs an important and, in fact, indispensable office in this respect. The narrow black velvet band about the throat accentuates the transparency of the shadows in the depth of the hair. The face is very smoothly and delicately painted, charming in its refinement and sweetness. T. C.

RICHARD WILSON

CHAPTER IV

RICHARD WILSON

(1713–1782)

UNFORTUNATELY for the landscape-painter in eighteenth-century England, the people of the time neither knew nor cared very much about out-of-doors nature. Gibbon said he visited the country to see his friends, not the trees; and Johnson thought a man tired of London was tired of life. The poets of the time — Pope, Cowper, Thomson, Goldsmith — considered landscape a very good stage property in literature, and had a warmed-over Homeric affection for it, but they possessed very little first-hand knowledge of it. They talked of "mournful skies" and "cruel seas" and "frowning mountain heights" just as though nature were in the habit of indulging in fits of human emotion. But it sounded well in the march of poetic numbers, and that is all the poets cared about it. In painting the interest in landscape was almost nothing. The connoisseurs talked about Claude with affected enthusiasm, but they would not look at Gainsborough's woodlands; and Richard Wilson, the first landscape-painter in England, exhibited his pictures year after year, and yet lived and died neglected.

On the Continent the taste was not very different. There was a dinner-plate and fire-screen landscape extant, which served the purpose of boudoir decoration; and of course there was admiration for Claude and Poussin, for they were popularly supposed to have bettered nature itself. Italy was still the great academy of the arts, and all the painters of Europe who could afford it flocked there to study art at its source. Wilson, like the rest, was smitten with the Roman fever, and he too went off to Italy, leaving behind him one of the most picturesque countries in the world, to learn at Rome

the art of painting an abstraction called the ideal or classic landscape.

Originally Wilson had come from Montgomeryshire, where he was born August 1, 1713. His father was a clergyman, and, it is said, gave his son a very good classical education. A relative, Sir George Wynne, discovered in the boy an inclination toward painting, and brought him up to London to study under a portrait-painter named Thomas Wright. He remained with Wright six years, learning the ancient art of "face-painting," and apparently to some purpose. His portraits are now scattered or lost, but those that remain to us, like the likeness of himself with the white cloth about the head, and the portrait of Mortimer, both in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, are not without much artistic merit. At thirty-six Wilson started for Rome. In Venice he met Zuccarelli, who was then enjoying great popularity as a painter of sugar-coated landscapes. The great man advised the little man to stop "face-painting" and to take up landscape. Vernet, the French landscapist, whom Wilson met in Rome, advised him in the same strain. The advice was accepted, and Wilson soon became famous. For six years he remained in Italy, painting the Italian view, and receiving much applause from his fellow-artists. In 1755 he returned to England. He was favorably received, for his fame had preceded him, and at first he was moderately successful. His "Niobe," painted for the Duke of Cumberland and exhibited in 1760, gave him rank; but he found out soon enough that pictures of landscape were not in demand, and, notwithstanding he was an original member of the Royal Academy, his canvases would not sell. It is said that his personality was against him — that he had not courtesy or consideration, and made enemies where he should have made friends. Sir Joshua and his following did not love him, and perhaps said disparaging things about him. Possibly all this was true enough, and yet Turner, whose social failings were much greater than Wilson's, had no trouble in selling his pictures. The truth is that in Wilson's day the subject he chose was against him.

Again it is alleged that Gainsborough's landscape pushed the work of the older painter out of the market, but it is a well-known fact that the Gainsborough landscape sold no better than the Wilson. Neither of them was valued or understood. Gainsborough could afford to paint his landscapes for pleasure, since he

CICERO'S VILLA, BY RICHARD WILSON.

OWNED BY THOMAS AGNEW & SONS, LONDON.

was deriving a handsome profit from portraits; but poor Wilson, relying upon landscape alone, soon began to feel the pinch of poverty. Year by year his living kept slipping away from him. As he sank lower and became poorer he seemed to shrink away from his fellows like some wounded animal. At last he crept into a small place on Tottenham Court Road, where he lived no one knows exactly how. It is said that he hawked his pictures among dealers and pawnbrokers for a few shillings. In his later years all that kept him from starvation was a pittance that he received as librarian of the Royal Academy. When nearly gone from age and want, a small estate came to him by the death of a brother. He went out to the Welsh country to live, and there, amid landscape and flowers, though too old to work, he seemed content. But this lasted for only about a year. In May, 1782, death released him from "the apathy of cognoscenti, the envy of rivals, and the neglect of a tasteless public," to quote Fuseli.

As frequently happens in art history, Wilson's death drew attention to his art, and the "tasteless public" began to dig up his memory and put it upon a pedestal for worship. In 1814 some seventy of his canvases were exhibited at the British Institution, and people began talking about "the giant Wilson," "the great master," and "the English Claude." His friend Peter Pindar had predicted as much forty years before:

> But, honest Wilson, never mind;
> Immortal praises thou shalt find,
> And for a dinner have no cause to fear.
> Thou start'st at my prophetic rhymes;
> Don't be impatient for those times:
> Wait till thou hast been dead a hundred year.

These be sorry rhymes, and their only virtue is that they speak a truth. To-day Wilson's landscapes, though they do not meet with the "immortal praises" which were predicted for them, are nevertheless much sought after, and the painter himself is ranked as the founder of landscape-painting in England.

Yet it was not precisely English landscape that Wilson painted. To be sure, he portrayed the mountains of Wales, and some of the rivers of England, with the subjects directly before him; and he painted Niagara, and the Acropolis at Athens, without ever seeing either of them. But all his pictures had the golden sky and the

silver light of Italy, and all of them were fashioned after the classic manner of Claude. Wilson had learned his lesson in Rome, and he never entirely forgot it. No matter what his theme, his method did not vary materially. And yet the result was no mere imitation. He translated Claude—that is, he Englished him; just as a century before Ruysdael had translated Salvator Rosa into idiomatic, even classic, Dutch. The translator was conspicuously present in both cases. There was a mingling of personality and tradition. The teaching of Italy did not change Wilson's northern blood, nor did it make Corot less of a Frenchman; but it gave an outer dress to the art of both men. Wilson spoke always with the voice of Jacob, for that he could not change; but the southern mother of the arts had given him the hands of Esau.

His landscape is easily described, for the point of view, the composition, and the general treatment vary but slightly. It usually consisted of an outlook through a framed foreground of trees upon placid waters, dusky groves, classic ruins, and crumbling monuments. In the foreground there were small figures under stately trees and beside broken columns; in the background there were distant hills, a yellow sky, and a glow of twilight glory. In sentiment it was reminiscent of the deathless past, and had a tinge of sadness about it. Not only the trees and groves harked back to Arcadia, but the broken fragments of Roman temple and Tivolian villa, bleaching in the sun, tenantless save to the crannying wind, their very ruins perishing from the face of the earth, were all eloquent of classic heroes and their deeds. It was a note of sentiment to conjure with, but it had been sounded before. The subject and the sentiment were picture materials that Wilson had gathered up at Rome.

Then, too, the dark arabesque of trees in the foreground, the sunny middle distance, the bright sky at the back, were less of a novelty than a variation. Wilson did not show his originality in these features so much as in his distribution of light and air, and in his body of color. He had seen and studied light for himself; and while it always had a silvery glow to him, it had also breadth, universal diffusion, penetration. At times its brilliancy was forced by the dark-shadowed foreground, but its reality was not lessened thereby. Just so with his atmosphere. It was permeating, enveloping both near and far, not scumbled about the distant hills and wholly absent in the foreground, as one sees in only too many Claudes. In

color he cultivated something of the conventional mahogany in his trees and rocks; but he harmonized it very cleverly with his golden skies and reflecting waters. He handled it with a regard for its unity, and, moreover, made something charming out of it as sentiment.

There were other features in which Wilson was a nature-student, irrespective of what Rome taught, as one may discover by studying his trees, clouds, waterfalls, flying mist, and river-banks; but his distinctive originality lay in his light, air, and color. One sees these qualities better, perhaps, in his less pretentious canvases, such as the small "On the River Wye," his Welsh mountain scenes, and the little pictures now hanging in the Foundling Asylum in London. There is in the Glasgow gallery a "Convent—Twilight" by Wilson that is really startling in its beauty of color and light. It is wholly unlike his usual subjects, and suggests what unencouraged possibilities the painter had within him.

His classic compositions, such as the "Niobe" and the "Cicero's Villa," seem to have less spontaneity about them. They were the only kinds of landscapes standing a ghost of a chance of selling in his day, and they sometimes have an air of being tortured into grandeur for exhibition purposes. Still, even in his most conventional pictures Wilson is usually interesting. It was not to be supposed that he could abandon every tradition, strike off for himself, and produce something entirely new. Even Gainsborough did not do that. The talk about painters "going to nature" and leaving all the art of the past behind them is often very misleading. As well expect the poets to abandon rhythmic numbers and forget the "Iliad" and "Faust." About all that either of them can do is to improve upon an established formula. This Wilson did. The first one to paint landscape in England, he was accounted the best of his time, and that is perhaps the most that can be said for any painter.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

IT was said, concerning the pecuniary hard lot of Wilson, that as Kneller, the portrait-painter, found dead men indifferent paymasters, so inanimate nature proved but a cold patroness to Wilson. He at one time, in despair of obtaining a commission, inquired of the painter Barry, his friend, if he knew "any one mad enough to employ a landscape-painter." Painting "landskips" in those days was about the next worse business to writing poetry or star-gazing, so far as

a livelihood went. Wilson was one of the pioneers who opened up the way to the present-day appreciation of the abstract beauties of nature. He was a portrait-painter until he was thirty-five years old, and might have returned at any time to that lucrative calling; but his love of landscape was too strong, and he preferred to come down to one small bare room, one table, a chair, an easel and one brush (he used but one, however, in painting), and a hard bed, with a few clothes, rather than paint portraits in comparative luxury. In other words, he chose to dwell in happiness with the kind of art he loved, though at the sacrifice of creature comforts — if, indeed, he felt he was sacrificing anything in that direction; and though it is customary to commiserate his extreme poverty, and to conclude therefrom that he dragged along, on the whole, a miserable sort of existence, I rather imagine it was otherwise with our lover of nature, and that he doubtless realized the truth expressed so beautifully by Wordsworth in his poem written on the banks of the river Wye, that

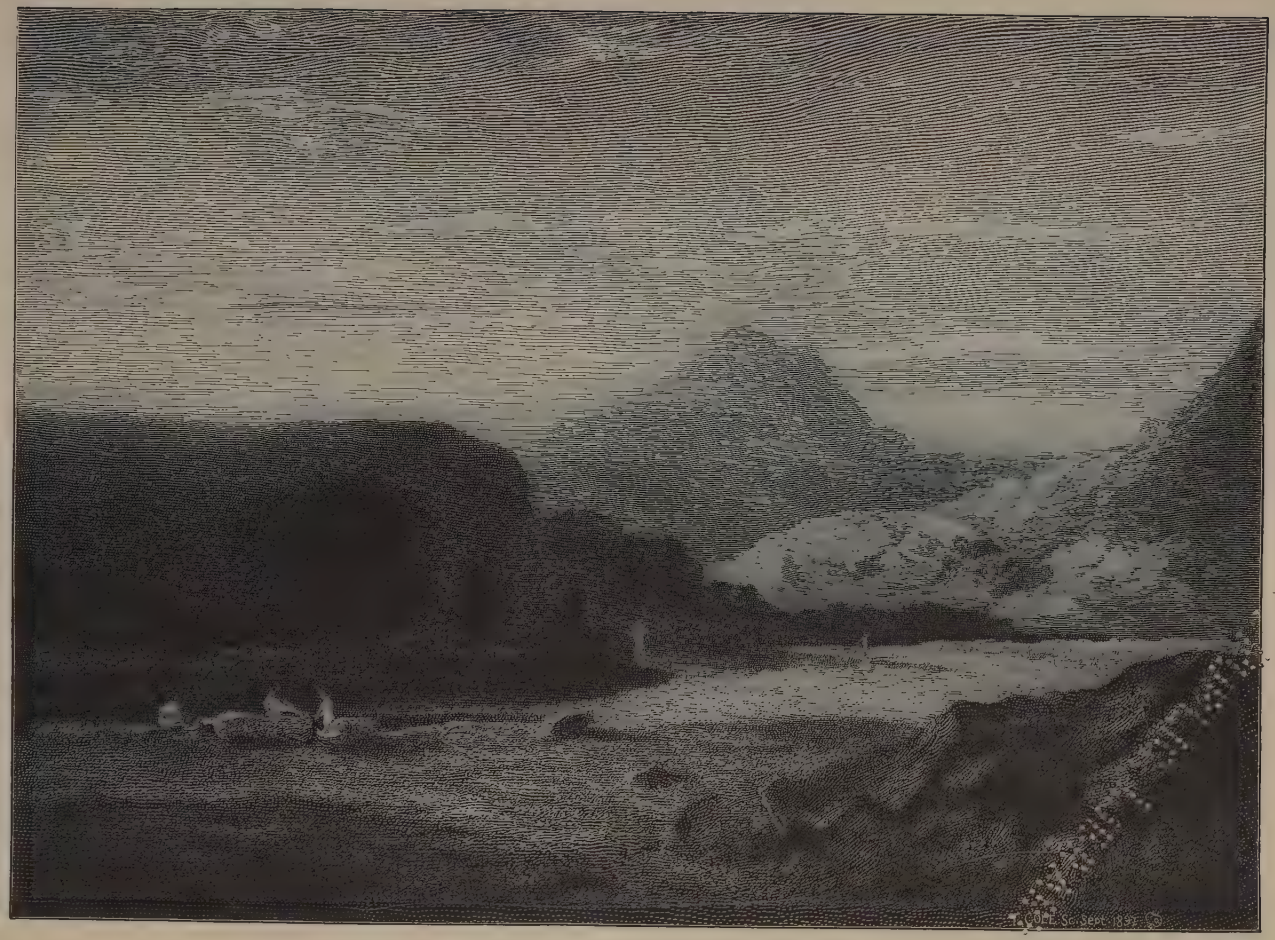
> Nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege
> Through all the years of this our life to lead
> From joy to joy.

His whole heart was in his art, and he talked and dreamed landscape, and loved to sit of a fine evening enjoying the glowing sunset from his humble window, wrapped, doubtless, in the "joy of elevated thoughts." He must have passed many a serene and happy hour with the mistress of his choice, and this is evidenced in the feeling of tranquillity that reigns in his landscapes and which is their keynote. How calm and peaceful is the canvas of "Cicero's Villa"! It is like prayer. And this is, I fancy, the sentiment intended here. The singularly still attitude of the woman with the child at her knee makes me think she is teaching the little one its evening devotions, for she appears to be placing its hands reverentially together. But I notice that the artist is careful to subdue this figure to a just value with relation to the sky. It is lower in tone than the tower, as it naturally would be, for this latter, rising higher, catches more of the light of the sky. It is necessary that this figure be unaccentuated, as otherwise it would prove a harsh note, coming as it does in the middle of the lower line of the picture. A modern artist would place it differently, or, what is more likely, abolish it altogether; but ideas were different in Wilson's time. The very spirit of repose broods over all. Note how everything lends itself to the idea. The sun has just set, and the solemn coloring of night is enshrouding the landscape; the sheeny lake mirrors in its unruffled bosom the silhouetted forms of the cattle and the mountain-side; and the ruin — a favorite object with Wilson — contributes powerfully by its suggestiveness to the prevailing quietude, for from within its precincts all sound has long departed. But it was in the sky that the painter seemed to delight particularly, and here it is palpitating with faint undulations of vapor that form here and there into scarcely visible clouds, vague and fleeting and so very far away, and the whole mellowed and steeped in the golden light of the sun — the whole of the picture bathed in this golden tone.

Quite another thing is the little canvas in the National Gallery, ten by twelve inches, entitled "On the River Wye." Here it is nature pure and simple that entrances the artist, as much as it did the poet Wordsworth years afterward when he wrote his famous lines on its banks, beginning:

> Five years have passed.

The artist, from his lonely room in Tottenham Court Road, 'mid the din of the



ON THE RIVER WYE, BY RICHARD WILSON.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

city, might well have exclaimed with the poet:

> When the fretful stir
> Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
> Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
> How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
> O sylvan Wye!

There is a dewy freshness and vernal aspect — a luster of pure atmosphere — in this little picture that is very attractive. You feel in it a remoteness from all contagion of city air. And underlying this, and contributing doubtless to the effect, is its piquancy of treatment, its lightness and spontaneity of touch — a quality of technique that places it in advance of his earlier Italian pictures. There is something so very charming about the sky with its little fleecy clouds drifting along. The sky is a very tender, warm blue in color, becoming mellower toward the hills, which are atmospheric in their fluent tones of blue-gray, amber, and green connecting the landscape with the quiet of the sky. Then come broad patches of sunshine on the hill and ground of the middle distance, while the foreground is shaded by some tall cliff to the left, but out of the picture, which gives a rich carpet of varied tint, greenish, and interwoven with brighter and cooler tones of the same, forming a lovely quality of color. T. C.

GEORGE ROMNEY

CHAPTER V

GEORGE ROMNEY

(1734–1802)

ROMNEY has always cut a rather romantic figure in English art, because of his lively spirit, his wayward imagination, his mingled strength and weakness, his promise of things never fulfilled. Of all the English painters he was the most mercurial in temperament, the most swayed by personal feeling. Restraint was not a word in his vocabulary. He had an impetuous way of throwing principles to the dogs which seems to have been placed to his credit as artistic righteousness, and an impatience of effort that his admirers have naïvely accepted as proof of peculiar genius. As for laws, he made them unto himself as the wind blew, and changed them again as the wind blew; and the only certain thing about him was his uncertainty. A Euphorion fancy carried him along whither it would. Sometimes its drift was right, sometimes it was wrong; but, right or wrong, Romney was always being blown from one extreme to another. There was no such thing as repose in his life, and no man counted him happy till he was dead. The contrast with his two great contemporaries seems to emphasize his fickleness: for Sir Joshua was a character with a philosophy, and Gainsborough was a temperament under control; but Romney was largely an impulse.

He came out of the north of England, having been born at Dalton, in Lancashire, December 15, 1734. His father was a carpenter and cabinet-maker, and naturally wished his son, who was gifted with considerable mechanical skill, to follow in his footsteps. But the son was bitten with a fondness for music and the arts. It is said that the woodcuts in an old magazine and Leonardo's "Treatise on Painting" were the influences that first turned him

toward painting. However that may be, the boy would be a painter, and a local portrait-painter at Kendal by the name of Steele, wanting an apprentice just at this time, took Romney into his studio. The apprenticeship was never completed. After a year or so Steele ran off to Gretna Green with an heiress, and later went to Ireland. Romney, who was always a bundle of nerves, had been a participant in the escapade, and was so overwrought by it that he fell sick of a fever. In the studio deserted by his master there seemed no one about to care for him, except a young girl named Mary Abbott. She succeeded in nursing him back to life, whereupon Romney, in an impetuous burst of love or gratitude, married her.

He now began portrait-painting on his own account among the country people. What he had learned from Steele no one knows, but possibly his local constituency was not too exacting. It is said that his first production to attract attention was not a portrait, but a hand holding a letter, which he painted for the post-office window at Kendal. It remained there for many years after Romney left the town, and was no doubt looked upon by the country folk as something wonderfully fine. Shaksperian compositions were also in the mind of the painter at this time, and doubtless what leisure he could beguile from portraiture he devoted to them. He was ambitious from the start, but with what artistic success we know not. Financially he seems to have fared tolerably well. At twenty-seven he held an auction sale of his pictures and cleared something like a hundred pounds. With this money in his pocket, he set out for London. Of course the wife and two children were left behind in the country, and it was many a long year before they saw Romney again.

In London the painter attracted attention to himself almost at once. The year after his arrival he won the second prize of the Society of Arts for a picture called "The Death of Wolfe"; but he never received more than a present of twenty-five guineas in lieu of it. Romney thought that Reynolds had sided against him and in favor of a painter named Mortimer, and this was the first cause of ill feeling between the two men. Subsequently Romney became a member of the Incorporated Society of Artists, was admitted to study in their schools, and exhibited with them and also at the Free Society; but he never sent anything to the Royal Academy, of which Sir Joshua was president, and never became a

member of it. He was just as impetuous and headlong in his judgments of men as in his art, and he never succeeded in cultivating a friendship for Reynolds. No one knows the right or wrong of the misunderstanding. Perhaps the president was not too generous in his treatment of the young painter, for he and Gainsborough also had a lifelong agreement to disagree; and yet there are many records of Sir Joshua's cordial treatment of other young painters.

Romney was successful in London, but not at all satisfied with painting portraits at five guineas a head. He longed for foreign travel, and in 1764 he went to France. Vernet and others received him handsomely, and no doubt he profited much by the sight of foreign pictures. The work of Rubens in the Palace of the Luxembourg is said to have attracted him, and certainly he took no small interest in the sentiment and subject of Greuze. When he came back to London it was with something of the air of one who had been abroad and seen the sights. He took a house in Great Newport Street under the very nose of Sir Joshua, and soon gained fame. He scored a success with a portrait group of the family of Sir George Warren, and found himself suddenly become in the fashion. A group of admirers, led by Thurlow, gathered about him and placed him in opposition to Reynolds. He was now worth twelve hundred or more a year, but was by no means satisfied. He thought to gain more renown by making a journey to Italy.

In 1773, in the company of a miniature-painter named Humphrey, he started for Rome — a letter to the Pope from the Duke of Richmond in one pocket and a diary of travel in the other. The diary has some slight interest, because Romney traveled through France in the years preceding the Revolution, though of course he was no such observer of social conditions as Arthur Young. He traveled down the Rhône to the Mediterranean, where he took ship for Genoa, and eventually reached Rome by way of Florence. When he arrived at his destination he went into seclusion, shunned his English compatriots, especially the friends of Reynolds, and gave himself up to study. But Rome was hardly the place for one of Romney's make-up, and notwithstanding he copied the great masters, as recommended by Reynolds in his Academy discourses, he seems to have got less from their art than from the study of the living model and the Italian life about him. The principal copy that he made while in Rome was after

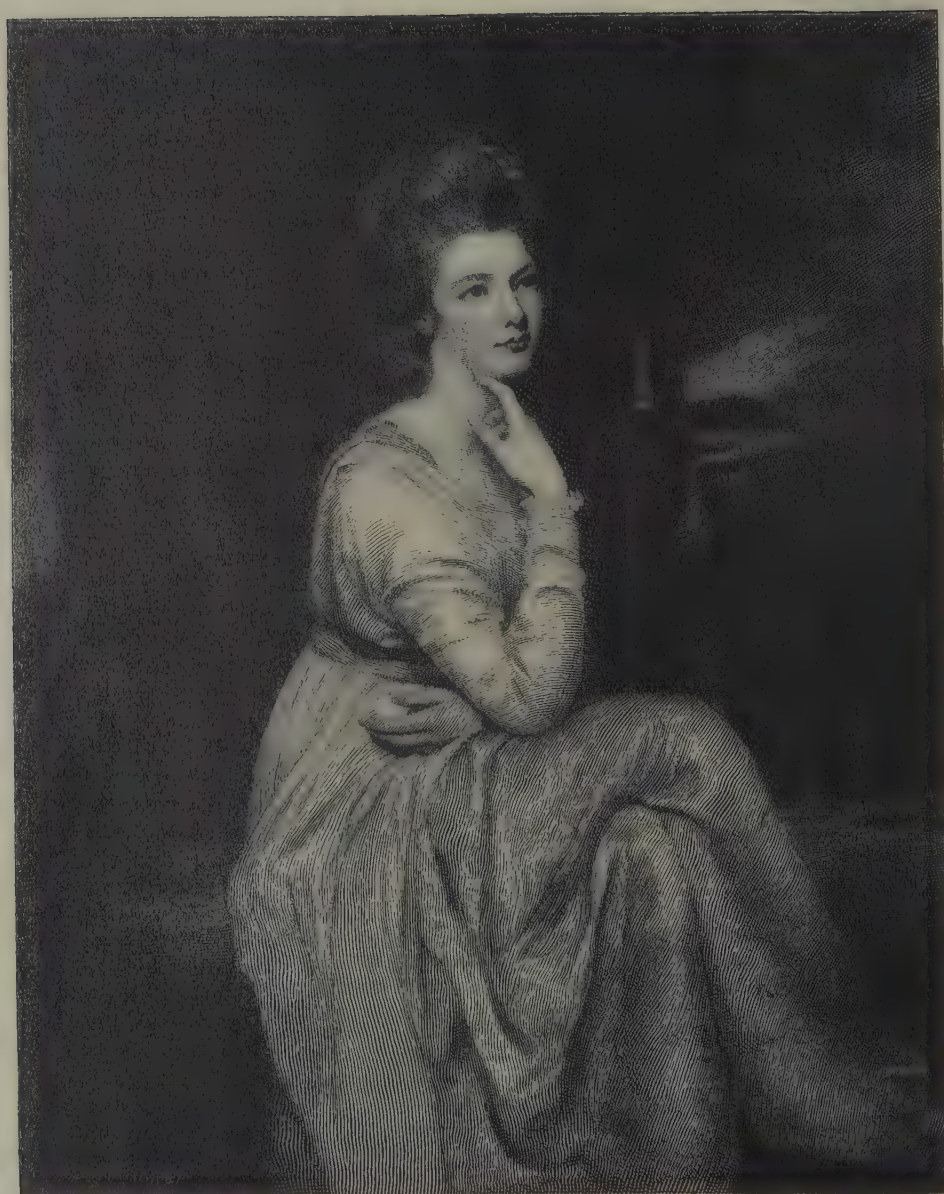
Raphael's "Transfiguration," and this was subsequently sold at auction for six guineas.

Under Roman inspiration he, of course, started a large classical canvas. It was the regulation thing for the visiting artist to do in those days, as at the present time. Romney's performance was a "Providence Brooding over Chaos," which suggests Michelangelo. The picture was afterward sold under the name of "Jupiter Pluvius," which seems to intimate that the Biblical quality of the work was not even skin-deep. Romney had no real affinity with Rome or Michelangelo or Biblical characters; he was nearer in spirit to the fair women painted by Giorgione, Titian, and Paolo Veronese: and when he reached Venice he declared the art of the Venetians far above that of the Florentines. It was more sensuous than the Florentine art, and Romney, for that very reason, was enabled to comprehend it more completely. No doubt he learned from Titian's canvases something about color, and no doubt he admired Correggio at Parma to some purpose, since he was certainly in artistic touch with the grace and gaiety of Parmese painting; but after all the possible influences are taken into account, the fact remains that the most the painter got out of Italy was the reputation of having studied there for two years.

Romney had to borrow money to get back to London, but he immediately took a house in Cavendish Square, where fortune and many sitters smiled upon him. He was soon making four thousand a year, and was accounted the formidable rival of Reynolds. Of course Sir Joshua would not admit it, but his way of referring to Romney as "the man in Cavendish Square" showed that he felt it. For twenty years Romney was successful; but the wife and children he had left up in the north were no sharers of his good fortune. He did not go near them. There was another woman who shared at least some of his attention, and was responsible for some of his pictorial popularity. This person was none other than Emma Lyon, afterward Lady Hamilton, whom he met in 1782, and who posed as a model for some twenty-three of his pictures. She appears under various names,—"Hebe," "Calypso," "Sibyl," "Mary Magdalene,"—but the fair face and figure are easily recognizable. He was devoted to the "divine lady," as he used to call her, and quite heartsick when she left London for Naples with Sir William Hamilton; but whether he was her lover or not cannot now be determined. It is improbable that he was,

PORTRAIT OF MRS. DAVIES, BY GEORGE ROMNEY.

COLLECTION OF EDGAR SPEYER, ESQ., LONDON



LADY DERBY, BY GEORGE ROMNEY.

COLLECTION OF SIR CHARLES TENNANT, LONDON

for when Romney met her, and all the time he knew her, she was deeply in love with Charles Greville. Her contented life with Greville, and her pathetic letters of protest when she was so coolly transferred to Sir William Hamilton, prove this fact conclusively; and it is not likely that she was at that time entertaining a second lover in Romney. She was a type of beauty that appealed to Romney as a painter, and the relationship between them was probably that of friends. When she went away he continued his portraits and his attempts at historical canvases, growing perhaps a trifle more erratic as he aged, but still holding his own against competitors.

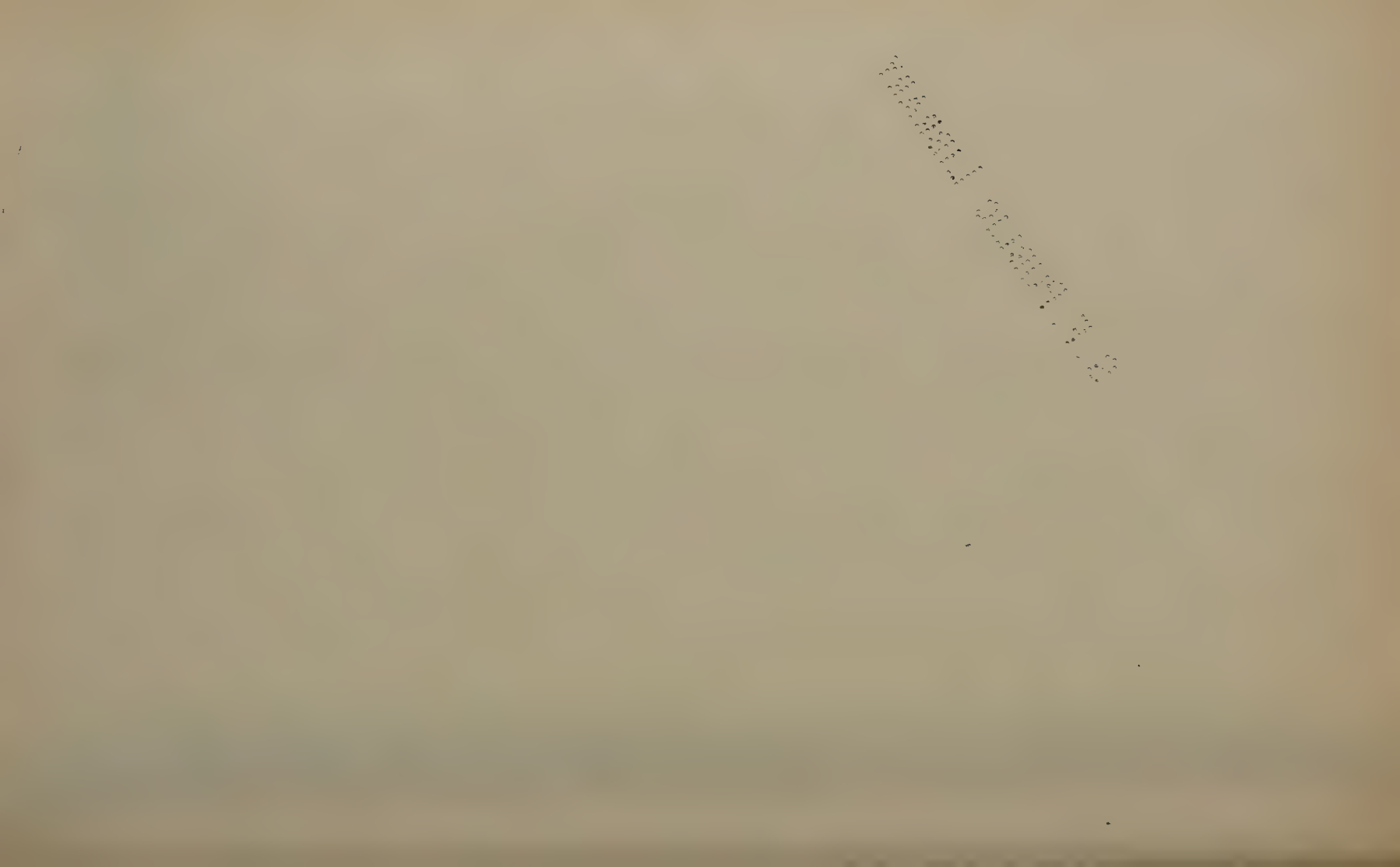
In 1790 he made a second trip to Paris, where he became one of the English ambassador's party, saw famous pictures, and met famous painters like David and Greuze. He was impressed by the great classicist, and he had long been an admirer of the great sentimentalist. But Paris could not hold him for long. He came back to London with the ambition of building a large house at Hampstead and fitting it up with casts from the antique. He thought that the casts might help him as models in working upon historical pictures. The house was built, Flaxman in Rome got the casts for it, and in 1797 Romney left Cavendish Square. He was no sooner in his new house than he fell into a despondent, dejected mood. His overstrung nerves lost their elasticity, and he began to fail in mind as well as in spirits. As for his hand, that, too, lost its cunning, and he did little more at Hampstead than fret over his countless unfinished, never-to-be-finished canvases. Cut off from his friends, dreary in spite of his fame, and feeling that his vital forces were deserting him, he looked about like a helpless child for some one to save him from destruction. It was then that he began to think of his wife, whom he had not seen for thirty years. In 1799, when he had become half mad and quite feeble, he went back to her, apparently without notice of any kind; and she, good soul, received him, nursed him, took care of him until he died in 1802. A moralist might think, and perhaps not unjustly, that this quiet, simple forgiveness on her part was worth all the pictures Romney ever painted. Edward Fitzgerald said as much, in his "Letters," and with considerable positiveness in the statement. Yet Romney, irresponsible creature that he was, probably never thought himself guilty of any wrong-doing. Nature had not endowed him with much moral stamina. He was largely an impulse.

It was Romney's misfortune to be born with a susceptible and excitable disposition in which reflection and philosophy were not factors. Always headlong in action, he did a thing first, and perhaps thought about it afterward. His marriage, the desertion of his wife, the return to her, were unpremeditated acts. He took up a picture, and threw it down, in just the same way. He was ever eager to begin a new composition, ever loath to finish an old one. A fine frenzy soon burned itself out, and the subject of it no longer interested him. All his life he struggled for expression in art; and yet the struggle was not so much persistent endeavor as a series of quick, impetuous dashes, from which the painter generally came off baffled. Brilliant enthusiast and passionate lover, a man with something to say, he wasted energy in misdirected effort, and groaned in spirit because he accomplished so little. In one of smaller gifts such results would meet with less regret; but in Romney's case it was most unfortunate, for he was endowed with the artistic sense in an uncommon degree. His eye was very sensitive to impression; his spirit was buoyant, spontaneous, predisposed to poetic rhapsody; his sentiment refined, delicate, freighted with charming conceits. To be sure, most of his acute perception and his emotional sympathy went out to the surface of things. The significance of an object, or of nature as a whole, was something that he did not inquire into too deeply. It was not the meaning of a face, but its look, that caught his fancy. All the Lady Hamilton pictures, and most of his allegorical portraits, have no ulterior meaning beyond form and color. He was not born with a profound mind to correlate facts and epitomize in paint the great world truths. Yet, with that fatuity of genius which so often leads the mind to mistake its weakness for its strength, Romney was forever straining up imaginary flights, seeking to ascend the brightest heaven of invention, striving after the sublime in historical painting. Needless to say, he was continually falling back in disorder. He was an observer, not a thinker. But experience never seemed to teach him that truth. He remained an impulsive aspiration to the last.

Such education as Romney possessed must have been picked up at haphazard. Things that interested him he worked out in his own way, for he was a very bright student while the interest lasted; but it is not possible to imagine him pursuing any regular course of study, or enduring much of the drudgery of art. From Steele, his first master, and from the London schools, he must have

THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER, BY GEORGE ROMNEY.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.



learned something. In France there was only one contemporary painter who seemed to interest him, and that one was Greuze. The shy young girl with arched head and sidelong glance appealed to Romney as to Greuze, and the two men were in perfect sympathy as regards their views of art. Indeed, if we can believe the tale of the "Parson's Daughter" and the Lady Hamilton heads, Romney's sympathy was so perfect that he accepted something of Greuze's type and manner without hesitation or compunction. As for his browsings among the old Italian masters, he understood little, gained little, as compared with Reynolds. All the sources of his information put together did not give him a sound technical education. He never was fluent in the grammar of art. One feels in his canvases the presence of a bright spirit that would be free, but is held fast by the medium—confined, like the jann in the bottle, and continually crying, "Let me out! Let me out!" His drawing was faulty, for he had only an elementary knowledge of anatomy; but he was decidedly picturesque in his outlines, and though he could not always relieve a head by light and shade, he could paint it cleverly enough. He was facile, too, in painting stuffs, draperies, and flowing hair; but with flesh he was too often florid, and with contours, again, too hard. His shadows, especially the shadows of the face or hands, were often red and uncomfortably warm; and as for his color, there was plenty of it, but in no great variety. Sometimes it had depth and harmony; but usually the gamut was limited, the notes a trifle shallow and lacking in resonance.

During his successful years in Cavendish Square he was exclaiming: "This cursed portrait-painting! How I am shackled with it!" He moved into his large house at Hampstead that he might rid himself of it and have a final try at the historical piece. That was his life's dream, but it was never realized; for composition on a large scale was beyond him. It was no more a forte with Romney than with Reynolds. His Miltonic and Shaksperian subjects have little to commend them. The "Infant Shakspere Attended by Nature and the Passions" is a group of figures kneeling about a square-headed child, and is hysterical as well as allegorical. The "Tempest"—a scene from the play, with Prospero and Miranda at the door of the cell—is a composition cut in two and strained in the figures. The "Milton Composing 'Paradise Lost'" is wholly wanting in imagination. The pictures of Muses, Bacchantes, Ariadnes, and Nymphs in landscape were

better, because they were merely portraits of handsome women in costume. His best and most complete work was his portraiture; yet even here he was not always satisfactory in composition. How many figures he placed awkwardly upon the canvas, with not enough room at the top for the head, and not enough at the bottom for the feet! How many pictures by him have added canvas at the ends and are cut down at the sides! Not to go beyond our illustrations, the "Parson's Daughter" is a square picture framed in an oval to help the composition, and the charming picture of Lady Derby is cramped at the bottom and empty at the sides. One might draw up a long list of these forms and faces pushed into spaces too large or too small for them. Romney was aware of these shortcomings. Hundreds of canvases were begun, and abandoned before finished. Many were cut to pieces in fits of discouragement. When he died his house was found to be full of "starts"; and, unfortunately for the painter's fame, he is now being judged by these sketches. With all his faults, he is deserving of a better fate than that; for occasionally he produced such portraits as "Mrs. Cawardine and Child," "Lady Cavendish-Bentinck," "Miss Sneyd as Serena," which cannot be praised too highly. He could, and did, do these fine, sensitive portraits; and once in a while he struck off the character of a man with surprising sturdiness: but the great mass of his work suffered from his want of perseverance. Impulsively he dashed at a canvas, without having thought it out; and then just as impulsively he threw it aside in disgust.

Romney was not unlike his contemporaries Reynolds and Gainsborough in his general point of view and in his technical execution. He had the same feeling for the winsomeness, gaiety, and coquetry of women; he often had the same subjects to paint from; and he set his palette with substantially the same warm-keyed pigments: but he was never their equal in breadth of view, in skill of hand, in painstaking effort. A painter born, he lacked the accomplishment of perfect expression, and could but inadequately tell the bright vision he saw in the well. The personal enthusiasm, the feeling for beauty, are manifest enough; they bubble up impulsively; and if at times they are somewhat crude, they nevertheless have the indescribable charm of unpremeditated art. Romney was nothing if not spontaneous. The great pity is that he had not his spontaneity under control. He longed for free utterance, yet could not endure the patient toil that alone leads up to it.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

ONE of the rarest and most delicate creations by Romney is the portrait of the "Parson's Daughter," which hangs in the National Gallery, London. As an example of English portraiture it is one of the most subtile heads of the art period in which Romney lived.

It has been said that the painter owed his fame to his benign enchantress, the "fair Emma,"— Lady Hamilton,— who posed for him in a great many of his works, though none of the many paintings which I have seen of her head executed by him can compare with this of the "Parson's Daughter," either in depth of sentiment or breadth of treatment; for the soul here breathes through the countenance because there is a soul beneath; the execution takes on greater simplicity; and the technique is of a higher quality than in many of his finest works. It is broad, loose, and fluent, inspired by the necessity of the occasion, and expressive of his mood at the time of seeing; for the artist evidently was preoccupied with the spirituality of his sitter. With what sympathy does he depict the subdued meditative feeling, the tender sweetness of a mild, unsullied nature, reared in an atmosphere of religious thought and chaste affection! The almost ethereal presence of the delicately poised head, in its cloud of soft hair, is beautiful to contemplate in its purity and innocence.

It is said that Romney always flattered his women; that he did not possess, like his contemporary Sir Joshua, the happy gift of viewing his sitter, by the aid of his imagination, through a sort of poetic haze that softened the commonplace aspect of every day. But what can be said, in this respect, of the "Parson's Daughter" or the "Lady Derby"? And there are many more such examples of single figures and portraits whose beauty and dignity inspire one with lasting respect for their author. It is the dictum of a famous Parisian portrait-painter of our day that artists should not exhibit portraits of women unless they show beautiful faces — unless the painter can combine beauty of arrangement and color with beauty of feature as well. Every element in the make-up must be of interest, but beauty of feature is of prime importance; for who can be interested long in a homely face? Yet character will always hold the attention, and how much can mere beauty of feature count for, if there be wanting that spiritual essence of beauty of mind? All the perfection of arrangement and color and form can never compensate for the want of this saving grace, and it is the lack of this quality — this sweet good sense — that we feel so distressingly in the Lady Hamilton heads; they show plainly the professional beauty in too many instances, and in some cases they degenerate from even this low standard into mere prettiness and simpering insipidity. In point of technique they fail as well, becoming labored and niggled to the texture of a chromolithograph. It is noteworthy here that Romney's infatuation with the "fair Emma" did not occur until he was nearly fifty and had fallen into a state of some mental and physical decay.

The canvas of the "Parson's Daughter," which is in a circular frame, showing a life-sized bust, measures twenty-five inches in diameter. The coloring of the whole, as in the majority of Romney's works, is a warm tone of grayish brown. It would seem as though he began his pictures in a thin, warm monotone consisting

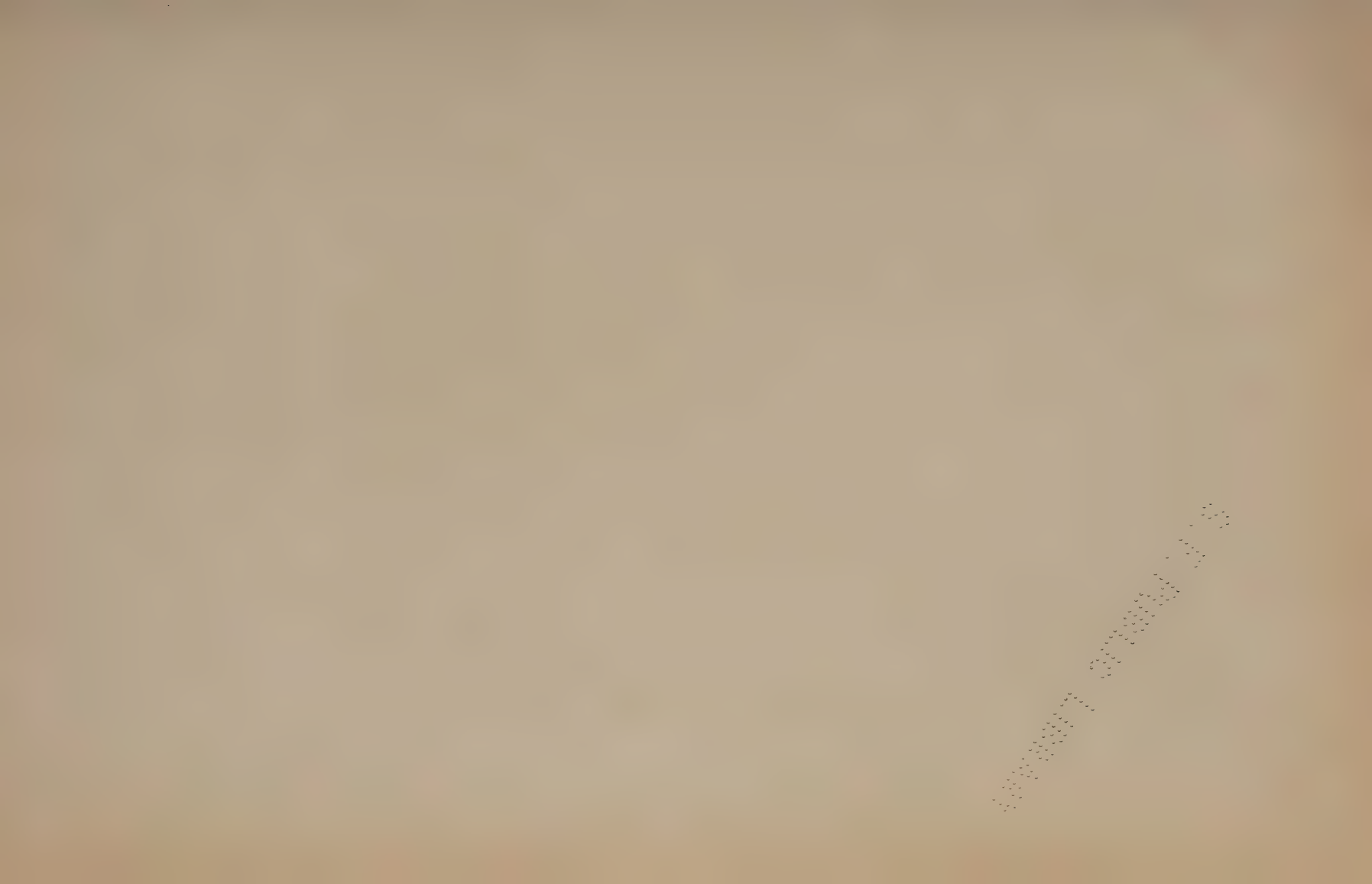
of black, yellow, and white, and worked them up in this way with light and shade, adding finally a little touch of color, rubbed on with his finger here and there, by way of brightening the ensemble. The hair in this example is auburn, or light brown, fading gently into the deeper tones of the warm background, as well as floating softly into the pearly gray color of the flesh. There is a bright note of color in the green ribbon that runs through the hair, binding it up from the forehead — it is bright compared to the whole, though in itself of a dull, soft hue. Romney's coloring is usually not harsh. The soft white tulle about the neck and shoulders is delicately managed with breadth and subordination. The waist below this is brown of a slightly more pronounced shade than the tone of the background.

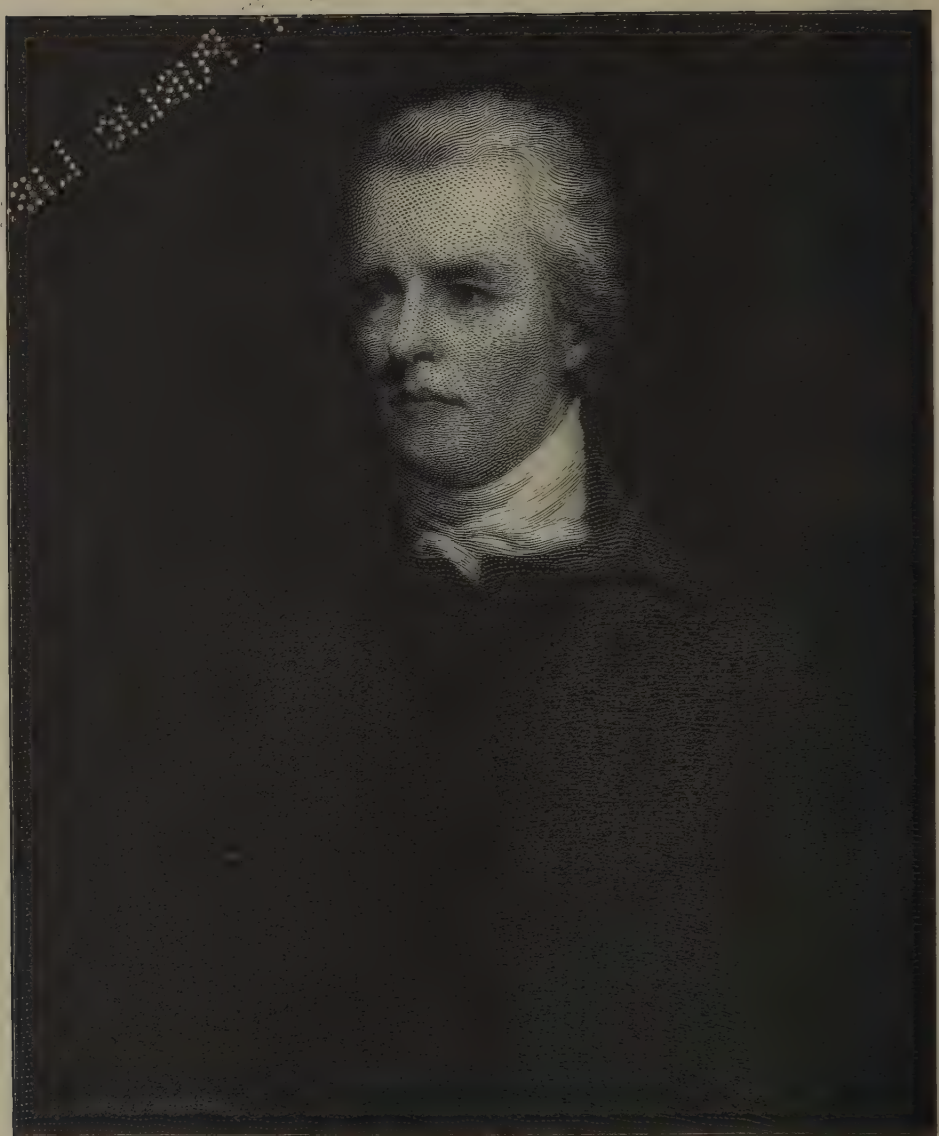
The portrait of Lady Derby is another example belonging to the class of Romney's poetical conceptions, though it is not wrought in so elevated a mood or in so rapid a space of time as we may imagine the "Parson's Daughter" to have been done, compared with which, in its treatment, it is less free, tighter, and more elaborate. It is life-sized, on canvas, and in coloring and chiaroscuro it is the richest instance I have seen by the master, combining few tones with great effect. Engraving could never give the profound and lustrous darks of its background, the warmth and rich brown shades of which are relieved by grayer patches of light seen through the trees and in the fine glimpse of landscape beyond. These gray touches lead up to the color of the drapery, which is of a soft, warm gray, and silky in texture; the lower skirt is damasked delicately and of the same value and color. The light steals gently along this, mounting to its climax with force and brilliancy in the warmer and more highly colored tones of the flesh. In point of technique it is innocent of anything like bravura and dexterity; there is nothing in it to arrest the attention and interest. He adheres in his treatment to the traditions of his time. "The secret of his success," as Mr. Lionel Cust aptly observes, "lay in his being a poet and a dreamer." "In Romney's brain," as he further remarks, "the fleeting visions of beauty nestled and made their home, and sought their outlet in the portraits on his easel. His art was entirely intimate, personal to himself even more than to his sitters." Yet it is only the mere connoisseur, I fancy, alive but to the technical side of art, who could fail to be impressed by the charming sentiment pervading most of his portraits of women. It is this tranquil, homely feeling that the artist sought should touch our hearts "and there for gentle pleasure live." We are touched by the inner sweetness and refinement of Lady Derby, for instance, who, we may imagine, has retired to a leafy grove in the cool of the evening for a moment of solitude and communion with the beauty of nature. "Gazing, she feels its power beguile sad thoughts." Or possibly she is thinking romantic thoughts that are to be converted into sad deeds. At twenty-one she was married to the Earl of Derby, but perhaps not happily married; for she afterward eloped with the Duke of Dorset. She died in 1797 — still young and beautiful as in this picture.

This feeling is less pronounced in the portrait of Mrs. Davies, which work, indeed, approaches more the general tenor of the majority of Romney's half-lengths. There is little attempt at individual character other than that general savor of femininity common to the sex, and which was the particular development of Romney's art. It is an example, too, of his hasty modeling and his want of a knowledge of anatomy. Observe, for a moment, the hand. How barren it is of all characteristic form save softness! It may be properly subordinated to the expression or interest

of the head, but a similar flatness prevails throughout the face; and apparently he could not bear to hurt the softness of the bosom by the intrusion of anything suggestive of anatomy — though no one would care to see a bony breast in such a case. The hair, too, partakes of the general indecision, though doubtless it is the softest of hair. It fades duskily into the twilight background, which in turn melts hazily into the distant hill and surrounding foliage, and which again floats dreamily down into the drapery. Compare, by the way, the drapery of this figure with that of the "Lady Derby." The grace and naturalness of this latter show at once that the artist had nature before him while he executed it, whereas with the "Mrs. Davies" the dress is evidently done from chic, as the French say — that is, from memory, or "out of the head"; and I should venture to say that all the other parts, with the exception of the head, are likewise done from chic. It is a life-sized portrait, and in coloring it is delicate and harmonious throughout. It is remarkably well preserved, as is the case with Romney's work in general, for the reason that it is painted thinly and without fugitive colors. T. C.

JOHN HOPPNER





THE RIGHT HONORABLE WILLIAM PITT. BY JOHN HOPPNER.

COLLECTION OF LORD ROSEBERY, LONDON

CHAPTER VI

JOHN HOPPNER

(1758–1810)

WHEN the prophet has gone hence, there lack not those who catch up his staff and mantle, and essay prophecy after his manner, if not in his name. The leader is not without his followers. And in English art it is no matter for surprise that after Reynolds had broken the ground, the Hoppners, the Beecheys, and the Northcotes should follow in the furrow. Sir Joshua had shown them how to paint the portrait in the elevated style, and the example was not bestowed in vain. They gathered up his pose and attitude, his arrangement of drapery, furniture, and landscape, his color, tone, and texture. In equipment they were well enough supplied, and they painted portraits that might pass current with the mob as Sir Joshua's very own, so like were they in superficial appearance; and yet there was a something wanting. A manner or a method is easily caught, but an individuality and a spirit do not lend themselves so readily to imitation. The vital quality of a work of art is not to be reproduced by rule.

John Hoppner was one of the most considerable of Sir Joshua's followers. He was called "the most daring plagiarist of Reynolds and the boldest rival of Lawrence," but sweeping assertions were not more accurate in those days than in these. Yet it is true that not only in art, but in personality, social qualities, and worldly wisdom, Hoppner was not unlike his master. He was born under the shadow of the court, lived under the wing of the Royal Academy, and during his life he never got very far from either. A Londoner knowing the life of the town, a bright talker, a questionable poet but nevertheless publishing his book of verses for fashionable consumption, and a clever painter of handsome women and distin-

guished men, he was always a popular success without being an artistic sensation. His birth was favorable to his social recognition; for his mother was one of the German ladies in waiting at the court of George III, and the king was his earliest patron. The tale is told that the king's interest in him was not wholly disinterested encouragement of promising youth—a tale that the painter did not object to having repeated. He liked to have it whispered with a wink that he was of royal extraction, and nothing would have pleased him better than a title of nobility, even though there were a blot in the scutcheon.

As a boy Hoppner was a chorister in the Chapel Royal; and when he wished to become a painter, the king gave him a pension and sent him to the Royal Academy to study. This was in 1775. Three years later he took a silver medal for drawing, and in 1782 the Academy's highest award—a gold medal—for a historical painting representing "King Lear." At this time he was living at the house of Mrs. Patience Wright, the American who gained celebrity for her portraits modeled in wax. It was here that he met many people of the town,—Garrick, Foote, West, and others,—and it was here that he met and married Mrs. Wright's daughter. In 1784 he went to live at 18 Charles Street, St. James's Square; and there, close to Carlton House, he remained until his death, January 23, 1810. He was buried in the cemetery of St. James's Chapel, and even in death was not far removed from the court he had painted and the gay circle of which he had been a not inconspicuous member.

Hoppner made progress from the start. He was devoted in his admiration for Reynolds, but that did not help him any at the court. The king had never liked Sir Joshua, and it was not long before he turned a deaf ear to his apt pupil. However, the Prince of Wales, who was at that time declared to have "taste," helped Hoppner out by making him portrait-painter to the famous throng that circled about Carlton House. He was elected an A.R.A. in 1792, and an R.A. in 1795, so the prestige of the Academy was also with him. At this time Reynolds was dead, Romney was failing, Lawrence was as yet little more than a boy wonder, and for a short time Hoppner had matters quite his own way. But Lawrence was coming up fast in the race for popular favor. The king had made him court painter over Hoppner's head, and the old struggle between Reynolds and Romney was to repeat itself in the rivalry of these

PRINCESS SOPHIA, DAUGHTER OF GEORGE III, BY JOHN HOPPNER.

WINDSOR CASTLE.

younger men. Politics, too, had something to do with it. It was Whig against Tory, the prince's faction against the king's. Art for art's sake was an unknown shibboleth at the Georgian court. Politics were rubbed into everything—even into the portraits of the royal family.

But both as a painter and a courtier Lawrence was the stronger man, and, being younger, he eventually pushed Hoppner to the wall. Finally the older man lost his temper and exclaimed with some petulance: "The ladies of Lawrence show a gaudy dissoluteness of taste, and sometimes trespass on moral as well as professional chastity." It was a cry of weakness, and provoked only a town laugh. The idea that the staid old dowagers of the court should look gaudy and dissolute, while the rapid members of the Carlton House circle simpered through blushes, was a little too ridiculous. It is said that Hoppner's remark had the effect of driving half the beauties of the prince's set into Lawrence's studio. Lawrence himself made no reply. There was little bitterness on his part. When Hoppner was dying he went to visit him, but the kindness was misinterpreted. "In his visits there is more of joy at my approaching death than true sympathy for my sorrows," was Hoppner's comment. Lawrence really admired him very much, and in 1810 he wrote to a friend: "You will be sorry to hear it; my most powerful competitor—he whom only to my friends I have acknowledged as my rival—is, I fear, sinking to the grave; I mean, of course, Hoppner. . . . You will believe that I sincerely feel the loss of a brother artist from whose works I have often gained instruction, and who has gone on by my side in the race these eighteen years."

The rivalry between the men was, of course, not one of principle. It was merely a struggle as to which should paint the greater number of the nobility. It was Hoppner's best boast that he was painter extraordinary to "people of quality." He did not disdain the painting of the other and the lower half of society, but he preferred the grand lady in white, with marvelous hat or wig, seated in romantic landscape, or the young lord in Brummel cravat, Petersham trousers, and blazing waistcoat. During his life he sent no less than one hundred and sixty-six pictures to the exhibitions of the Royal Academy, and most of these were princes and princesses, lords and ladies, bishops, generals, politicians. In 1803 Wilkin engraved a select number of his portraits of women,

and they were published under the fetching title of "A Select Series of Ten Portraits of Ladies of Rank and Fashion." It is a little remarkable how preternaturally noble these ladies look. In that respect they might all be descendants of one royal strain, rather than different people of doubtful breeding.

But Hoppner had a receipt for aristocratic looks. It was "a vulgar error to make things look too like themselves"; and one of his admirers summed him up by saying that he had "the power of improving what was placed before him without annihilating resemblance." Yes; Sir Peter Lely had the same power in the same land, with the same kind of sitters; but plain people spoke of it as the power of flattery. Hoppner was given to it. He could iron out wrinkles, shape noses, and mold faces to please fashion; and the more he improved upon nature, the more fashion liked it. It is true, in one sense, that he did not annihilate "resemblance," for all his ladies of rank look somewhat alike. The eyes are exaggerated in size; the noses seem done from one model; the cheeks are all heavy in the angle of the jaw. There is a Hoppner ideal about them. Again, there is a resemblance running through his portraits of women in the sentiment displayed. The heads droop at sad angles, the eyes look unutterable things, the manner is listless, far away, abstracted. Love seems to have shot arrows into them all. They are victims of the same romance, and seem to be affected in the same melancholy way. One misses the sharp snap of individual character in the sitter. This is equally true of his children. They are generalized, prettified, and yet not without grace and charm. Sometimes they are sprightly, naïve, even childlike, though of noble birth, as witness the lovely "Princess Sophia, Daughter of George III," which Mr. Cole has engraved.

Hoppner has been credited with painting women successfully, and practically failing with the other sex. But one may be pardoned for registering a dissenting opinion just here. He thought that women loved the gentle lie, and approved of flattery; therefore he flattered: but men required something of truthful character rather than sweetness; therefore he painted character. The portrait of Pitt is an example. How very positive it is in the strong jaw and chin, the deep-set eyes and prominent eyebrows, the altogether powerful head! Here Hoppner told the truth in the frankest manner possible to him. He was not smoothing a fashionable brow, but emphasizing a thoughtful one; he was not modeling a

Hoppner nose and jaw, but painting the individual features of Pitt. Given the strong face, and Hoppner could paint it in a strong manner.

And this, too, despite inaccuracies of drawing. He never knew—the Royal Academy could not teach him—how to draw accurately; but he had the school knack of modeling in paint and producing a surface appearance that was perhaps the more lifelike for being somewhat irregular. Accuracy does not necessarily mean vitality. A rambling drawing of a cottage may give the picturesque bulk and look, where a ruled architectural drawing would give only an empty cardboard skeleton. Hoppner set hats and eyes askew, lost at times the position of the nose as related to the mouth, and was never fortunate in drawing a jaw or a neck; but in spite of these laxities, he usually made something lifelike, interesting, picturesque—something that, without a suggestion of caricature, was more natural than nature itself. And that was what he was seeking. All these English painters were more concerned with the spirit of their work than its form. Life—the sense of being in the presence of something that once lived and moved—is omnipresent. How much academic portrait-painting in the present day gives one the impression of the subject having been painted after death from a photograph! It is accurate enough, but how icily regular, how splendidly null! Hoppner's portraits show that he was not able to draw with classic precision; but perhaps his ignorance of line was his artistic salvation, for it led him to substitute the color patch, and to gain in natural effect what he lost in linear truth.

In his figure-pieces—for of course, being only a portrait-painter, he had to attempt the historical composition—he was even less accurate than in portraits. His sleeping nymphs are swathed in graceful swirls and flows of drapery, but they have dislocated arms and legs, or they are elongated for effects of grace. His "Jupiter and Io," following Correggio, is decidedly heavy; his "Pisanio and Imogen" shows necks, shoulders, and arms sadly out of drawing; his "Cupid and Psyche" gives poor Psyche not foreshortened, but telescoped. And yet, in spite of these sins, Hoppner did convey a sense of animation. His rambling, loose line seemed to lend to action. The picture of "Mlle. Hillsberg as a Dancing-girl" in an Oriental interior is a good instance of it. It is one of the most ambitious of his subject-pictures, and is uncertain in its drawing and painting; yet what a feeling of dash and

movement forward there is about the figure! The painter was not always so successful. The "Mrs. Jordan" in the character of the Comic Muse, and the "Jessamy Bride" (Mrs. Gwyn), are not equal to the Mlle. Hillsberg picture, though graceful in drapery and rather good in color.

Hoppner's handling doubtless added to the spirit of his work. It was facile in such features as drapery, hair, foliage; and usually ran on, recording slips and errors just as happily as truths. He never possessed sufficient elementary knowledge for facile brush-work, but that did not discourage him. He dashed at things, and tried to hide deficiencies by glibness. Nor had he a deep sense of color, but he dashed at that just as boldly. It was usually thinner and frailer than that of Reynolds,—something too much of high soprano, with insufficient body in the orchestral accompaniment,—but it was not badly arranged, nor was it wholly lacking in charm. To-day his color often appears marred from the use of pigments that have faded and varnishes that have yellowed the whites. Sir Joshua's faults as well as his virtues were appropriated by his followers.

Before he was twenty-four years of age Hoppner was looked upon as a possible success as a landscapist; but after he became established in court circles he did little more than paint Fashion's face. His figures, his landscapes, his rustic pieces (for he followed Gainsborough in that subject), are of small importance. Nor was he a success in the historical composition. There was really no public demand for it. Opie complained that "so habituated are the people of this country to the sight of portraiture only that they can scarcely as yet consider painting in any other light." The painters rarely got beyond the single figure. When they attempted the historical, it was little more than a modified portrait group, and not very good at that. Yet Hogarth, Hoppner, and all the painters of the time denounced the public for its admiration of old Italian pictures at the expense of English ones.

Hoppner lives to-day by his portraits. The best of these are still in the private houses of England. There is a notable gathering of them in the state apartments of St. James's Palace. But, unfortunately, the pictures in the public galleries of England do the painter scant justice. It is true he was a follower of Sir Joshua, but not exactly the "daring plagiarist" he has been called. He had a spirit and a view of his own; and those who think they know

THE COUNTESS OF OXFORD, BY JOHN HOPPNER.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

the man and his work occasionally stumble upon examples of him, in the English country houses, so astonishing in their individuality and force that they call for a revision of judgment. He is not to be judged wholly by his sentimental "ladies of rank and fashion,"—portraits which he doubtless painted to keep in good standing with court society,—but by his "Pitt," his "Canning," and his children's portraits. These certainly entitle him to be named one of the best of those who came after Gainsborough and Sir Joshua.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

THERE is no finer portrait of William Pitt in existence than this one by Hoppner in the collection of Lord Rosebery, which we were granted permission to photograph and engrave. Hoppner made more than one portrait of the great statesman, and upon the decease of the latter executed repetitions of the same, especially of the one finished for Lord Mulgrave,— the Mulgrave portrait,— the last that Pitt sat for to the artist. It is evident, however, that this life-sized bust which Lord Rosebery owns was painted from the living man. Lawrence, the contemporary of Hoppner, also painted a portrait of Pitt, which was much praised by a critic of the time as evincing the mind of the man; but it has nothing of the virile quality that this one by Hoppner possesses. And small wonder that it should be so lacking, since it was painted from a death-mask and animated from one of Hoppner's portraits—to all appearances from this very one engraved here.

It was character, first and last, that Hoppner aimed at in this head. The bold yet unassuming front, and the erect, sturdy carriage, with the left arm behind the back and right one forward, are noticeable. He stands as honest and as firm as a rock. We feel the power, energy, and moral stamina of the man. I like the well-proportioned lineaments of the face. The alert and resolute mind is there, and the habit of thought is observable in the slight contraction of the brow.

The technique of the head, though not disclosing any very marked degree of facility of brushwork, reveals, nevertheless, a manly vigor of execution not reminding one of any other style, save, in a vague way, perhaps, that of Reynolds; while in the general handling and arrangement we see how the artist sought to express his sentiment of the character, as, for instance, in the disposition of the bust upon the canvas. The placing of the head well above the center lends a character of dignity and distinction to it, independent of that which the artist imports into it from his own insight. Another element which contributes force in this direction rests in the fact that it possesses but three pronounced values, namely: the white of the neckerchief, the gray of the face and head, and the mass of the surrounding dark color. Its important changes of surface are left thus simple, that the eye may take in with ease the full effect of the head. Then, again, to the solidity of texture and force and brilliancy of light and shade discernible in the head, the treatment of the background and coat greatly contributes; for the coat — the tone of which is a soft warm shade of black tinged with a faint bluish or greenish cast in its broad lighting — fades gently into the rich bituminous depth of

the background, and is subdued and subordinated in its details to the expression and interest of the head. Though this portrait shows Pitt at about the age of forty, yet his hair is already white, the result, doubtless, of the cares and toils of his active and arduous career.

In the portrait of the Countess of Oxford, the figure, posed out of doors, is, as may be imagined, illumined by the last rays of the setting sun, while the background against which it is relieved is composed of the blue-gray tones of moonlight; the moon is shown just dipping below a great dark cloud. It is a purely fanciful conceit on the part of the artist, for the effect is not studied from nature, but put in from chic, and the figure lighted by the prevailing studio-light, which served in those days equally for outdoor as for indoor effects. The arms are thrown into shadow, apparently because the artist wanted a strong concentration of light upon the dominant point of interest — the head and bosom. It is a very unusual treatment of arms, and I have not met with another instance of its kind in the art of this epoch. I should unhesitatingly question the good taste of it on the ground that the arms of girls are usually too beautiful thus to be utterly cast into the shade. The rule regarding such important parts — immemorial in its custom with respect to portraits — is that they should occupy, in the general scheme of lighting, a second or third tone lower than the dominant light and point of interest. There is considerable breadth of treatment in the head; the hair is managed with fullness and softness. The necklace is of coral, and its brilliant note of color — the brightest touch in the canvas — is not without importance in its bearing upon the general tone of the flesh, as well as in its attracting the eye naturally and instantly to the face.

The countess is here shown, life-sized, at the age of twenty-three years. The picture is painted on wood, size two feet six inches high by two feet wide, and hangs in the National Gallery, London. It is astonishingly fresh in color. There is another portrait of the countess, likewise by Hoppner, in the Louvre at Paris, in which she is seen some six or seven years older. The lady's maiden name was Jane Elizabeth Scott. She was the wife of Edward, fifth Earl of Oxford, born 1774, died in 1824. The picture was bequeathed by her daughter Lady Langdale to the National Gallery in 1873.

The portrait of the little Princess Sophia must have been a likeness that gave due satisfaction when finished; and even at the present day it seems to reassure one of the personality of the model. It cannot be objected to Hoppner's children, as it has been to his women, that they were painted after a formula: first handsome, and afterward a likeness. The artist evidently felt the naïve beauty of childhood, and sought to portray it above all else; and though his little sitters might be princesses, they were as children that they first appealed to him. In the present instance the pose and sentiment of the arrangement could not be more happily chosen or more characteristic of a child, shown as the princess is under the open sky upon the hills, and pausing for a moment to look at the spectator while busy flower-picking. The contrast of the sunny head against the black and threatening clouds was a happy thought. The background is a conventional affair emanating from the studio. The upper dark cloud is forced up to a pitchy blackness in order to relieve the head in as striking a manner as possible; also the black cape is chosen for the same purpose, while the golden head, with its harmonious yellow straw hat and ribbons to match, could not have a more brilliant setting, illuminated, as it is supposed to be, by a ray of sunshine from out the stormy sky.

T. C.

SIR WILLIAM BEECHEY

CHAPTER VII

SIR WILLIAM BEECHEY

(1753–1839)

THE career of Sir William Beechey reminds us anew of the ease with which a fashion-made fame may "blaze and pass away." Sir William was a court painter, a Royal Academician, a much-praised delineator of society folk in the time of George III. During a long life he exhibited at the Academy upward of three hundred and fifty portraits of royalty, nobility, and celebrity; every one of note sat to him, and after Sir Joshua he was the first painter to be knighted by the king; and yet to-day there are few of his profession to do him reverence. His reputation and even his pictures seem to have disappeared from view. Some of his portraits are still in royal residences and English country houses, but one rarely sees his work in public places.

Beechey was born at Burford, December 12, 1753, and was destined by his parents to follow the legal profession. At first he was articled to a conveyancer at Stow, Gloucestershire, and afterward to a solicitor in London. He had not been long in town before he became acquainted with some art students, and that was probably the beginning of his fancy for art. In 1772 he broke through the legal mesh and became a pupil at the Royal Academy. He had Sir Joshua before him as an example of what constituted success in art, and Paul Sandby was a friend and adviser from whom he doubtless learned much. Being naturally precocious, he soon attracted attention to himself. In 1775 he exhibited some portraits which were hailed with enthusiasm by his fellow-students, and from that time on he was ranked as a painter of some importance.

After his Academy days, Beechey removed to Norwich, and

remained there four or five years, painting subject-pictures. It is said that these pictures were a genre "after the style of Hogarth," which seems somewhat remarkable considering the official quality of Beechey's mind and later art. Just what the value of these early works is it is difficult now to determine, for the originals are widely scattered or lost. Possibly they did not prove any too remunerative, for the painter came back to London, took a house in Brook Street, and began painting portraits once more. The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland were among his earliest patrons, and he did not lack friends and sitters among the fashion of the day. The Royal Academy elected him an associate in 1793, and the same year he received a commission to paint the portrait of Queen Charlotte. This latter honor gave him the title of painter to her Majesty the Queen, which, of course, raised him still higher in fashionable esteem.

Shortly after Beechey had finished the queen's portrait he had the chance to put forth what has been called his masterpiece — a large equestrian group of George III with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York reviewing the hussars and the dragoons. The picture is now at Hampton Court, where it forms a part of the long array of canvases and gold frames which the visitor is glad to let slip by him unnoticed. It is a somewhat bombastic performance, a showy group of portraits with little force of character or nature study in it. Besides, there are many painter's artifices about it that rather detract from the sincerity of the undertaking. But it served Beechey's purpose well in gaining him court favor. The king knighted him and the Royal Academy made him an academician. Fashion now flocked to him with increased eagerness, and he became for a time the favorite painter in the town. For many years he held a following of his own, notwithstanding that Lawrence came to the front, claiming the adulation of the hour. He finally retired to Hampstead, and died there in 1839, a very old man. He was twice married, his second wife being a miniaturist, and he left two sons who became painters of some rank.

Beechey's portraits belonging to his first period were executed with precision, and, it is said, bore excellent likeness to the originals. They look it. Something of true feeling for the personality of the sitter is apparent in them. They are painstaking efforts and by no means unsuccessful. There was no great artistic inspiration about them, no striking originality; but they were very re-

spectable performances. Later on, when he became prosperous, he also became careless in his drawing and matter-of-fact in his handling. What mental grasp and point of view he originally possessed seemed to congeal into one face, one figure, one pose. A type — the Beechey type — was the result. It was not unlike the Hoppner type, only less attractive. His court beauties are large of body, round of arm, heavy of cheek, and often of desperate dullness. In their white dresses, blue ribbons, and straw hats they seem to play at simplicity and innocence, and they have that unfathomable romance in their large eyes which was produced by studio receipt in Beechey's day.

Such portraiture hardly awakens a lively sympathy. It is too formal, too mechanical. It does not show any peculiar or attractive painter's temperament; it is not stamped by genius or even elevated by extraordinary skill. Occasionally Beechey did children with spirit and naïve characterization, as Mr. Cole's engraving happily indicates, and sometimes he did men with a British sturdiness about them; but these were exceptional. More often he produced the perfunctory portrait like the "Alderman John Boydell" at Guildhall or the "Mrs. Siddons" in the National Portrait Gallery. Respectable is the only word that fittingly describes it. It is not work over which one can grow enthusiastic.

His classical pictures were, like those of his contemporaries, lacking in imagination and in knowledge of composition. Following Romney, he posed young women as Bacchantes, Adorations, Evening Stars, Hebes; but in each case it was merely the idealized portrait with some attribute to suggest the title. The "Infant Hercules" was a Hercules only by virtue of his club, and when Beechey repeated the figure he substituted a cross for the club and called the result "John the Baptist." He knew little about historical painting, but, of course, he primed canvases and set palettes for it like every one in the school.

Technically Beechey was not stronger than the proverbially weakest link in the chain. He had such craftsmanship as was taught at the Royal Academy, but he was not enough of an original mind to invent a method of his own or even improve upon what had been taught him. His drawing was somewhat exact in his first endeavors, somewhat rambling and uncertain in his later work. His contours were always a little hard, his figures always a little stiff. In colors he fancied warm hues, and believed, with

Reynolds, that they should form the body of the work. He used them in his portraits of men, but preferred ivory whites and dull blues for women. There was no great depth to his color as a body, but it was usually satisfactory and often something more. It was perhaps the best feature of his art. In his lights and shadows he exaggerated Sir Joshua's method to a fault.

Reynolds groaned in spirit at seeing his shortcomings emphasized in the works of his followers, but he probably never dreamed that their pictures would pass current under his name. A painter usually accumulates enough artistic sins of his own without being held responsible for those of his imitators. Yet it has been Sir Joshua's fate to have not a few of Beechey's pictures laid at his door. Possibly that is why the Beechey portraits are so scarce at the present time. Since English art has come into fashion with picture-collectors the works of the pupils have been forced to do service for those of the masters. It is an old story in the annals of picture-dealing, begun in Greek days and carried through the Renaissance down to the present time.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

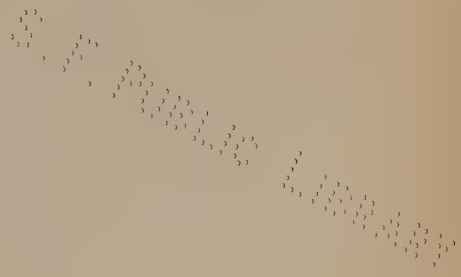
THE portrait-piece of "Brother and Sister" by Sir William Beechey is one of the best and most pleasing works in sentiment that I have seen by this master. It is a pretty fancy — the brother in the act of decorating his sister with the flowers she has gathered. One may with propriety fancy it is the occasion of the bright little creature's birthday, and a balmy summer day, the air about them breathing sweet. What so fair as the blameless pleasure depicted in their countenances? It is said that Beechey's early portraits were very accurate likenesses, and one might well imagine this to have been the case in the present instance, though I should have wished to see a little more breadth and lightness to the features, especially to the mouth of the little girl, whose face is otherwise sympathetically animated. The difference between the ages is well shown. The boy has the consciousness of superior years, and is sweet and gentle; the girl shows the roguishness and naïve unconsciousness of childhood, and is flattered in thus being adorned with flowers. I like her easy, blithesome air and attitude as jaunty as a bird's.

By a wise judgment the artist has directed the gaze of the boy and the dog off into the picture, while the girl only looks directly out at the spectator. Had all three been looking out of the picture, the sentiment would have been colder and rather affected. A warm, soft tone suffuses the picture. The background, always a difficult thing to manage when accompanying figures, is here very successful, being laid in with breadth and fullness, and subordinated, with an eye to the expression in the heads. The sculptured pedestal, upon the edge of which the boy is resting, is a warm gray, and

this color floats upward into the reddish tones of the curtain about the urn; and this, in turn, melts into the broad, flat mass of foliage, that is of a brown shade, graying down lighter where it meets a touch of deep blue sky, that softens into warm gray clouds which become reddish and golden toward the horizon. The distant hills, mixed with foliage, are of a bluish green brightly touched with darker spots suggestive of shady depths. The foliage of the trees in the middle distance is brown and golden in the high lights and cool green in the shadows; likewise the bank which slopes down to the stream, the tone of whose waters is scarcely distinguishable in its value of chiaroscuro from the brownish gray tone of the marble pavement of the immediate foreground. The dog is black and white. All these surroundings make an agreeable and harmonious setting for the figures, the boy being clad in velvet of a soft, deep tone of maroon, and the girl in white of a warm, mellow hue. The whole gives the impression of a golden summer afternoon. The canvas hangs in the long gallery of the Louvre at Paris, among the collection of English pictures there. It measures three feet in width by four and a half feet in height.

T. C.

SIR HENRY RAEBURN



MRS. R. SCOTT MONCRIEFF, BY SIR HENRY RAEBURN.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH.

CHAPTER VIII

SIR HENRY RAEBURN

(1756–1823)

THE best painter, in a technical sense, among all our so-called English masters was not an Englishman, but a Scotchman — Sir Henry Raeburn. Handling — the power to use the brush with certainty and ease — was his in large degree. He could hardly be called an imaginative artist, nor was he a draftsman or a colorist beyond the ordinary; but, in the Manet sense, he was quite a perfect painter. There are artists in history who seem to have been born to the brush rather than to the crayon — artists who take to paint as instinctively as swans to water. The names of Frans Hals and Velasquez come to mind at once as the chiefs of the class; and yet, in a smaller way, Tiepolo, Teniers, Goya, and Raeburn were just as truly to the manner born. Wilkie, when studying Velasquez in Spain, was continually reminded of the "square touch" of Raeburn. The resemblance in method — in a way of seeing and doing things — could not fail of notice. The men were of the same brotherhood, if not of the same rank, and in eye and hand they were both preëminently painters.

Raeburn's birth and education throw no light whatever on his peculiar technical ability. He sprang from peasant stock, and though the Scotch have always had fine native feeling in art matters, it was not to be supposed that one coming from the soil could overcome the final and most difficult phase of the painter's technique at the start. And yet that is what Raeburn apparently did. There is no record that he ever learned facility of handling from any one. He was virtually self-taught. Born near Edinburgh in 1756, he was left an orphan, at six years of age, in charge of an elder brother. What his boyhood was like, what his early inclinations,

no one seems to know. It has been stated, and denied, that he received an elementary education at Heriot's school; but it seems well established that at fifteen he was apprenticed to a goldsmith named Gilliland.

In the goldsmith's employ Raeburn developed a talent for miniature-painting, and his master, suspecting an incipient genius, took him to the studio of David Martin, who was the local "face-painter" for Edinburgh at that time. Martin seems to have encouraged the youth and given him some of his own portraits to copy; but they soon quarreled,— as is the not infrequent habit of master and pupil,— and what instruction the young man had received is unknown. Martin could scarcely have taught more than he himself knew, and that was little. Nor does it appear that any after instruction came to Raeburn. There was no other painter in Edinburgh at that time to teach him, and he did not leave the town until both his style and his reputation were in a measure established. Then he married a young widow with something of a fortune, and about 1785 went up to London, and met Sir Joshua. It is said that in London Raeburn worked in Sir Joshua's "painting-room" for a couple of months. The statement is questioned, though the painter certainly was not slow in adopting such methods of composition from the older man as he thought serviceable. He also helped himself to something of Sir Joshua's color and light, besides sundry methods of mixing and laying colors that brought to his canvases more harm than good. And Reynolds was very gracious to the young Scotchman. He advised him to go to Rome, and, of course, recommended a study of Michelangelo, with whose work Raeburn could have had little or no sympathy.

It is said that Sir Joshua, not knowing the young painter's easy circumstances through marriage (an ignorance which would argue against the "painting-room" story), generously offered him money and letters of introduction to painters in Rome. Raeburn accepted the letters, went to Rome, and remained there two years. He seems to have brought back with him some advice, got from an art-dealer by the name of Byers, which he spoke of frequently as being of great service to him. The advice was cheap, and at this day is quite hackneyed. It was, in substance, to work from the model, and not from memory. This was Raeburn's natural inclination, and of course he fell in with it. There is no trace in his painting that he brought back anything else from Rome. He must

have known Pompeo Batoni, to whom he took letters of introduction from Sir Joshua, and he must have met the Roman painters of the day; but they did not seem to leave any impression upon his art.

As for the old masters, they never persuaded him, never made a dent of any kind in his Scotch nature. Michelangelo's frescos in the Sistine he could doubtless admire without ever wishing to emulate, and a complicated piece of line and composition like Raphael's "Transfiguration" must have produced either opposition or weariness. For what were all the fine linear drawings of the Vatican to one whose eyes were focused to see in patched bulk rather than in sharp outline? What were the thin fields of color used by the Florentines to one who could work to advantage only with a heavily loaded brush? One portrait by Velasquez — say the "Innocent X" in the Doria Gallery — were worth them all. Raeburn may have seen this portrait; he may have seen Venetian, French, even Dutch painting at Rome, for that city has always been a great depot of art: but there is no tale in his life, nor trace in his art, of influences from these quarters. The simple Scot came home to Edinburgh, and, barring some acquired facility and a slight tendency to pay tribute to Sir Joshua's point of view, painted his portraits in the old way.

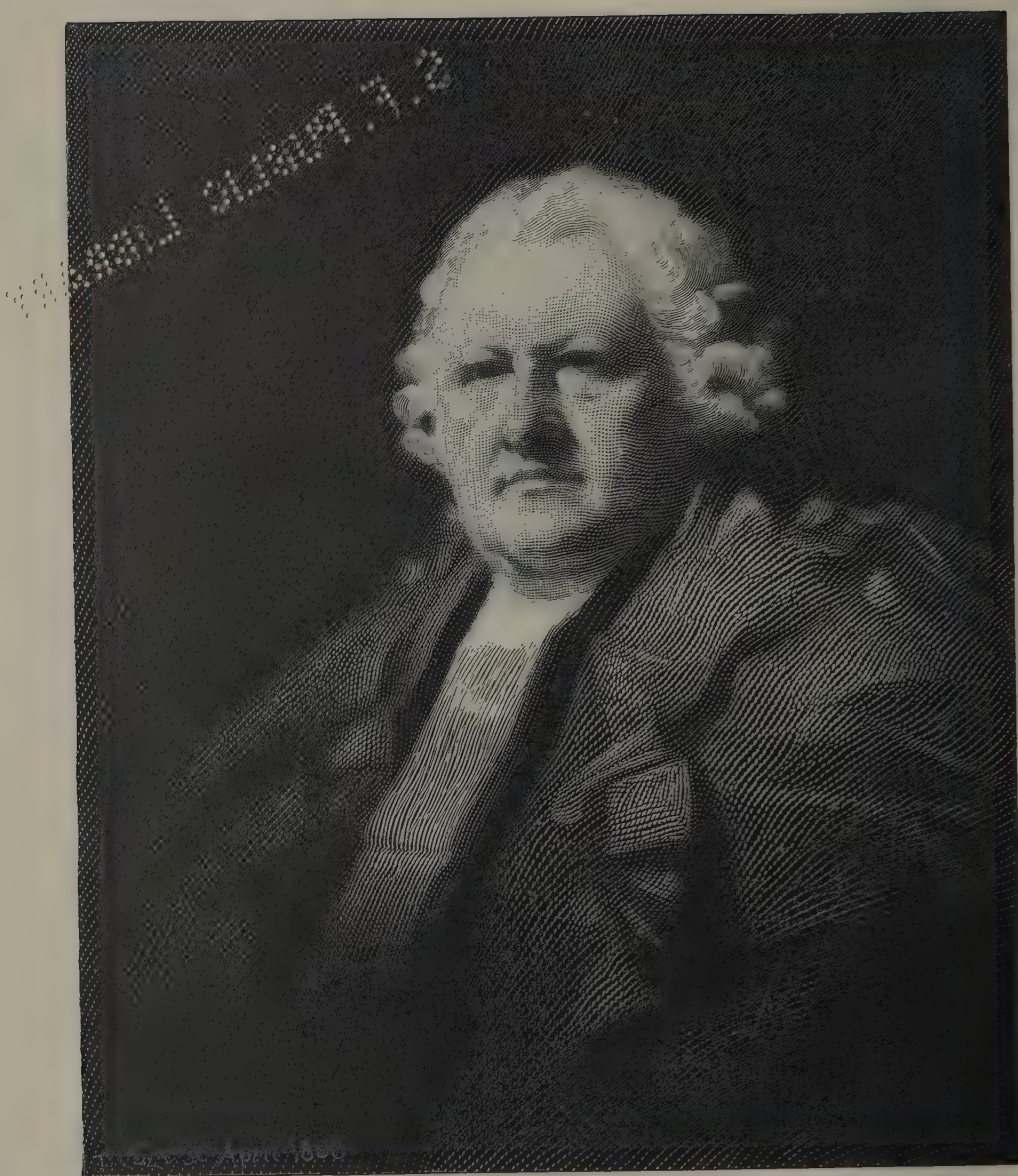
When Raeburn returned to Edinburgh in 1787 he soon established himself as the first portrait-painter in Scotland. For thirty years his social and artistic success was unbroken. In that time his brush had been employed in painting many famous Scotsmen, characters like Blair, Erskine, Mackenzie, Robertson, Wilson, Dugald Stewart. He painted Scott several times, and quite captured the bard's admiration as he painted and walked backward and forward from the easel. Sir Walter did not care for the likeness, and afterward declared that the painter had made a "chowder-headed person" of him; but he liked the personality of the painter, and wrote about him with some enthusiasm. At one time Raeburn contemplated moving up to London; but Lawrence persuaded him that it was better to be the Scottish Reynolds in Edinburgh than plain Raeburn in London. He visited London only a few times, and it was not until 1814 that he began sending portraits to the Royal Academy for exhibition. He was then elected an associate, and the next year an academician.

In 1822, when George IV was in Edinburgh, it is said that Sir Walter persuaded the king to honor Raeburn. At any rate, the

distinction of knighthood was conferred upon the painter, and shortly afterward he was made "his Majesty's limner and painter for Scotland"; but he did not live long enough to enjoy the office. After a week's illness, he died July 8, 1823, leaving as the last work upon his easel a portrait of Scott. In addition to being a member of many foreign art societies, he had been president of the Society of Artists in Scotland, and had received honors even from far-away America. During his life he had painted some six hundred portraits, which is a goodly number to come from the brush of a man who employed no assistants and did every bit of work on a picture from start to finish. In 1876 three hundred of his works were gathered together in the rooms of the Royal Scottish Academy. It was a memorable exhibition, and emphasized anew the sterling quality of the man and his work.

Considering the lack of technical education, Raeburn's art seems little less than astonishing. He achieved almost at the start, and apparently without effort, those qualities of simplicity and directness which many painters struggle for all their lives, and then often fall short of attaining. It was not only that he was able to paint simply, but he saw things simply, to begin with. And yet it remains to be said that both his range and his success were limited. The problem he undertook was not complex. He made few sallies into the domain of historical painting, and he knew nothing about decorative composition. He was a portrait-painter, and as such saw little more than the human face. He did not allow himself to be bothered to any great extent with color schemes or complicated picture-planes or extravagant settings. When he tried to compose he generally failed. By his own confession, a head was much easier for him to paint than a piece of drapery. He stumbled over accessory objects, often slurred them, and even his countryman the Duke of Buccleugh complained of his carelessness in painting hands. It is probable that he cared little for them. His first and last thought was the head, and his painter's eye was drawn by the expressive features.

In giving the characteristic look of his sitter he was usually successful; but when he went further, and tried to give the whole-length portrait in landscape or with elaborate background, he was not so happy. The attributed "Lady in White," in the National Gallery, London, done after the Reynolds formula, is somewhat heavy in spirit and flat in handling; his "Professor John Wilson,"



PORTRAIT OF LORD NEWTON, BY SIR HENRY RAEBURN.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH.

standing beside his horse, in the Scottish Portrait Gallery, is weak; his "Niel Gow," in Highland costume, with a violin, comes perilously near the bizarre. Given the bust portrait, and he could, at times, render it with great force. Nothing could be better of its kind than the portrait of Lord Newton that Mr. Cole has engraved. In giving the physical presence Frans Hals could not have gone beyond it. The portrait of Dr. Adam, hanging near the "Lord Newton" in the National Gallery, Edinburgh, has the same qualities of structure, and is struck off with the same square touch. Both portraits are quite perfect in their way.

These heads show Raeburn in his most energetic style—in fact, his best style. He could not always reach up to it, and with portraits of women he frequently fell below it. He never quite understood the "eternal womanly"; and the gaiety and coquetry of the sex made no such appeal to him as to Reynolds and Romney. A somewhat matter-of-fact Scotchman, large-framed and athletic, fond of outdoor games, machinery, shipbuilding,—all strong, muscular pursuits,—he naturally sympathized with the powerful, and preferred the masculine to the feminine type. But he was not wholly indifferent to womanly grace and charm, and in such portraits as those of Mrs. Scott Moncrieff, Mrs. Bell, and his own wife he showed refinement, delicacy, and not a little sense of beauty.

These portraits are given, however, with less pronounced modeling than shows in his portraits of men, and with the surfaces rubbed smooth. His concession to Sir Joshua was more marked just here than elsewhere. His fair women hardly suggest an individual point of view, and one gains the impression that the painter is somehow following the Reynolds pattern—working with intelligence and skill, but without enthusiasm or conviction. The graceful contours and elaborate costume of a duchess were not to his fancy, as compared with the rugged features and the strong flesh-notes of a well-fed judge or a Scotch landlord.

One cannot imagine a head like that of the "Lord Newton" having been first drawn with chalk or coal. It must have been painted, like so many of the heads by Frans Hals, with a full brush and a free hand. And that was Raeburn's way of working. He used the brush from the start, drawing and modeling with it, relying upon it for everything, and finishing a portrait with it in four or five sittings. Absolute accuracy did not always accompany his

facility; but bulk, weight, character,—in short, the personal presence,—were almost always given in a positive manner. Unfortunately Raeburn was fond of bitumen (something he may have heard of from Sir Joshua), and he employed that painter's plague not a little in his shadows. The results were, of course, disastrous. To-day the forehead curls in the portrait of Mrs. Scott Moncrieff have nearly slipped over the eyes from having been underbased in treacherous bitumen. The head of the "Lord Newton" has suffered in the shadows from a like cause. Raeburn did not use it invariably, and some of his portraits, like that of the Rev. John Home, in the National Portrait Gallery in London, are sound in every respect, and models of good craftsmanship.

There was nothing remarkable in Raeburn's art, aside from his simple point of view, his grasp of the portrait presence, and his mastery of the brush. He had little subtlety, shrewdness, or depth; little decorative sense in either line or color. His coloring was sober, often somber; or, if brilliant, it was shrill, or perhaps false in its lighting. Tone was a feature he never quite mastered, and atmosphere bothered him whenever he tried to give a naturalistic background. He lacked knowledge of the aërial envelop, just as he failed in the perception of the relation of objects one to another. The isolated face and figure he did very well, but the grouped or related figure baffled him.

He had several different styles of working, but it is almost impossible to give them in order, for he never kept a record of his sitters or dated his canvases. It seems that at first he was timid and tentative, employing his early miniature methods upon an enlarged scale. Then he grew broader and freer, developing a robust manner, resembling at times that of an American painter,—Gilbert Stuart. It seems that finally, following Reynolds or Lawrence, he painted with a smoother and a weaker brush. His method of handling must always have an interest for people of the craft; but to the public, that cares little about methods, he has been, and will doubtless continue to be, simply a good painter with limitations. He did not illustrate history or poetry, and had nothing to do with figures in group or tales in paint. He was only a portrait-painter, and even in that department he was more of a skilled craftsman than a creative artist. As a craftsman he had no rival in his age and country, and to this day Scotland is looking for his superior.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

IT is to Edinburgh one must go to see Raeburn, where, at the National Gallery of Scotland, it is impossible not to be instantly impressed with his force and superiority as a portrait-painter. It is in the vigor of his light and shade, and the noble conception and large presentment of his subject,— "the simple and powerful treatment," as Wilkie expressed it,— rather than in any minor resemblance of peculiarity of touch, that Raeburn may be said to possess something in common with Velasquez. Should, however, the experiment be made of placing these masters side by side, it would be seen that the simplicity of the Scotchman lacked the subtlety of the Spaniard, and that his "powerful mode of treatment" would have much that was coarse and bald and harsh about it.

However this may be, it in no way disturbs or mitigates our appreciation and enjoyment of such splendid work as the portrait of Lord Newton — a law lord, by the way — or the more charming and delectable "Mrs. Scott Moncrieff." What a contrast these two busts present to each other, in the virile quality of the man and the loveliness of the woman! How grandly the former fills the canvas! The sweeping line which the shoulders make from one end of the picture to the other is not to be surpassed in its suggestion of dignity by anything in the British school. As a representative of the bar, this "bluff bulk of beef and beer," as it has been unsympathetically termed, may be said rather to embody in its ponderous personality the weight and gravity of the law. Clad in his red robe of office and white wig, we may behold in this Lord of Session,— in his ample and visible capacity for thought, and impressive probity of mien, his character of assurance and moral solidity,— not a "bluff bulk of beef and beer," but rather tomes, and statutes, and canons, and thick-ribbed volumes of the Corpus Juris.

Charles Hay of Newton, near Glasgow, was born in 1740, and was called to the bar when twenty-eight years of age. He became a Lord of Session in 1806, and died in 1811. The bust, painted on canvas, is twenty-five inches wide by thirty inches high, and hangs in the National Gallery at Edinburgh. The red robe is not agreeable in color, being poor, dull, and bricky. The background is very dark brownish and rich. The flesh-tones are vivacious and of good quality. The light, concentrated strongly upon the head and upper portions of the body, fades gently and rapidly toward the lower portion, leaving its forms softened in the obscurity. Raeburn had a decisive and vigorous manner of blocking out his masses in a head, and his clear-cut and well-defined faces have a captivating freshness of handling and color that holds the attention with interest and pleasure.

The portrait of Mrs. Scott Moncrieff — one of the gems of the National Gallery of Edinburgh — ranks among the greatest examples of English portraiture. It is Cunningham who, in his "British Painters," commenting upon the common sense of Raeburn in painting only the heads of the illustrious people of his day, makes the gloomy reflection, discouraging to the artist plodding after perfection, that "hundreds of heads exquisite in character and color are manufactured annually, only to sink, with all their fine art, into oblivion; while the portraits of

the heirs of fame are treasured and prized without much reference to the merits of outline and color."

Now if this head of Mrs. Scott Moncrieff were an example of the hundreds of exquisite things which have disappeared into oblivion, it were indeed sad to think of. But the army of connoisseurs, lovers of art, antiquarians, and dealers, always on the scent for rare things, makes it well-nigh impossible for even a single work of genius to remain very long hidden away from the light of general recognition. And who was Mrs. Scott Moncrieff, that we should think better of her portrait because of her name, that we should value her portrait more on account of its art qualities, than whole galleries of antiquated physiognomies of past worthies that have little to commend them beyond the names with which they are ticketed?

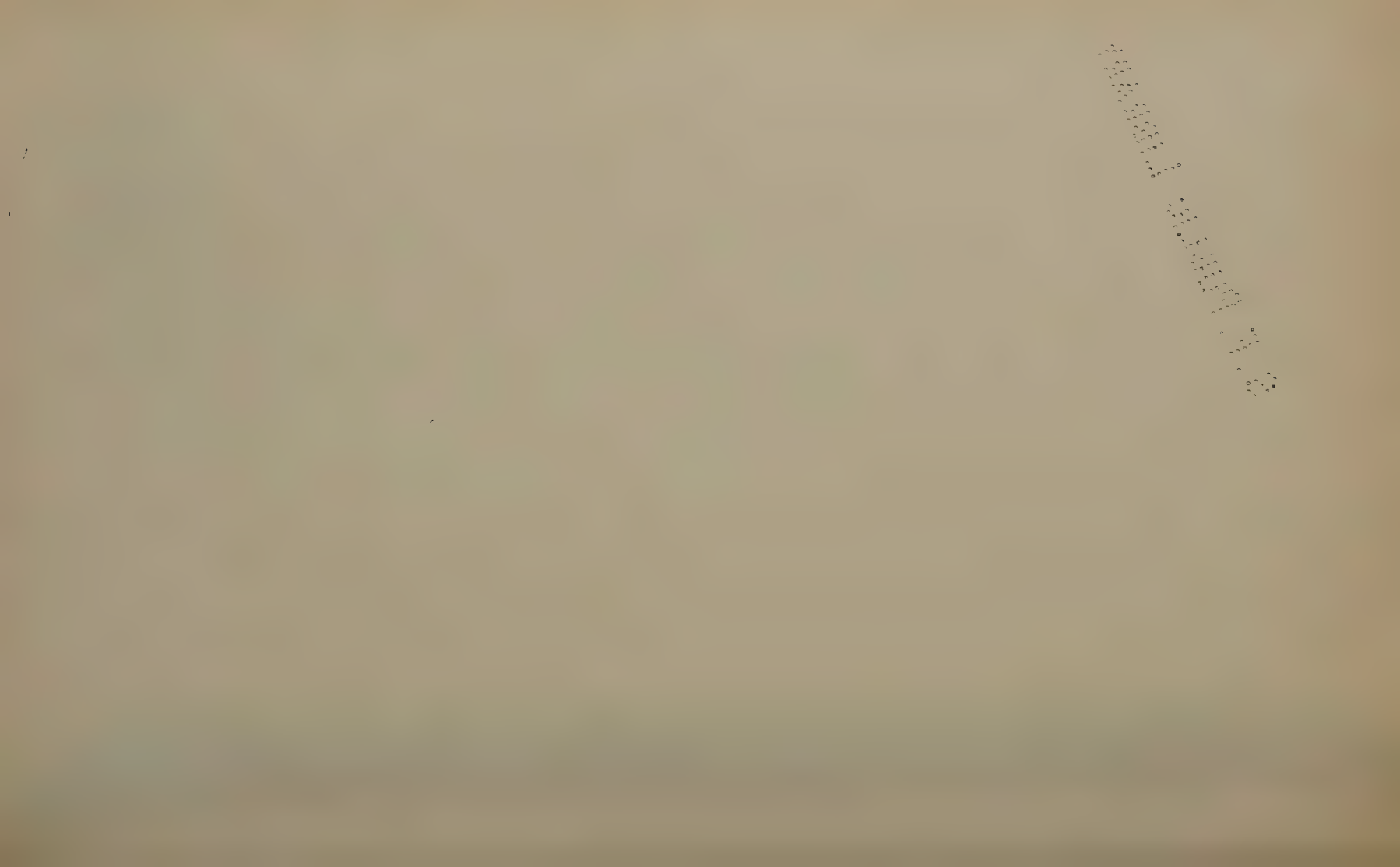
This lady's maiden name was Margaritta Macdonald. Wife of Mr. Scott Moncrieff, she afterward became Mrs. Scott Moncrieff Wellwood. The supreme charm of the head, to my thinking, is the unconscious grace of mind that enwraps it, the perfect ease and unaffected simplicity of good sense which it embodies. This is its first adornment. Though there is charming physical beauty, it is yet subservient to moral expression. The large, full, beautifully proportioned features are delicately modeled, and there is light in them; that is, they are in just value with relation to the broad mass of the light on the face. It is a very common thing to see eyes, nostrils, and mouths forced up darker than they should be in portraits; and this always, instead of contributing force to the face, robs it of refinement. There is atmosphere here also; the features are not cut up by defined lines drawn about them, but repose is secured and fullness given by the breadth of the masses and the softness of the contours; and a sense of intimacy is secured by the subtle gradation of its tones. The aërial softness that envelops it is vital to the sweetness of the sentiment in which it is steeped; and this, again, exists only by virtue of the flatness and suavity of its entire surface; for let any one of its details be tightened or the nuancing of any of its accents missed through inattention to the flatness of the tones, and spottiness at once ensues, with consequent loss of expression and repose.

The whole treatment of this beautiful canvas is different from the majority of Raeburn's works. It conveys no sense of direct handling. It is more subtle, flatter, and more smoothly painted; the evidences of its workmanship are not apparent. As may be imagined, the coloring is very simple. The background is of bituminous depth and richness. It is, however, owing to the treacherous medium employed, dreadfully cracked and frizzled, and this makes it impossible to photograph well. The other parts are not affected this way, and are comparatively well preserved. The coloring of the flesh has yellowed, somewhat disagreeably, by time. The low, square-cut gown of white silk of mellow hue is mounted by a red cloak thrown loosely about the shoulders and caught together again below the waist. This is not of a pleasing color, being of the same tone as the robe of Lord Newton, and does not accord with the charming sentiment of its chiaroscuro. The canvas measures thirty inches high by twenty-five inches wide.

In Raeburn's time the custom had not entirely disappeared of announcing all likenesses as portraits of ladies or gentlemen merely, and this usage was maintained even in the catalogues of exhibitions; so that it was easy to lose track of the names of the individuals they represented. But this practice began to be changed in 1798, when the better fashion

PORTRAIT OF A LADY, BY SIR HENRY RAEBURN.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.



came into vogue of affixing the full names and titles of the various "ladies" and "gentlemen" to their paintings. All we know of the "Lady in White" by Raeburn is that she was a member of the Dudgeon family, and that the picture was bequeathed to the National Gallery of London, where it now hangs, by Robert Dudgeon, Esq., in 1883. It is on canvas, life-sized, and measures seven feet nine and a half inches high by four feet eleven inches wide.

The picture is very well preserved, and is a capital rendering of white. It will be seen that the lightest spot is in the ribbon that binds the crown of the straw hat, though its local color is gray. It catches the light with a sheen, and shines with a higher note in the general chiaroscuro than the lightest portion of the white dress. This is a device in the scheme of its lighting to attract the attention to the head, where also, in the hair of the lady, is the strongest dark in the picture, which is valuable in serving a like purpose. The light strikes the upper half of the figure, skimming gently down, fading and graying by the contours insensibly into the depths of the warm tones of the background. There is an orange-colored scarf about the waist, grayed into harmony with the mellow tone of the white dress and with the cream-colored shawl that hangs over the left arm. The lady leans against a monument or pedestal in a grove of young beech-trees, the arrangement of whose upright trunks is discreetly broken by one slanting across. The whole tone of the background, including the pedestal, is rich and tender with delicate grays, greenish and brownish depths, with golden touches in the glimpse of sky seen through the trees toward the horizon; there are no distracting holes in the darker depths of the foliage, but all is softened, broadened, flattened, and bathed in atmosphere, with an eye to the object of main interest — all serving to enhance the illuminated figure and to set off the portrait with vigor and effect. The composition of the whole is successful, and although conventional in its adaptation of the landscape to the figure, and in its lighting, it yet shows an improvement upon many, if not the majority, of contemporary canvases of the like nature in the fact that more foreground is shown; the figure is not brought down to the very edge of the canvas, but is placed more agreeably back in the picture. This work has nothing of the spirited handling that we are accustomed to see in the greater number of Raeburn's paintings. T. C.

JOHN OPIE

CHAPTER IX

JOHN OPIE

(1761–1807)

IN Sir Joshua's day fashionable London was subject to all sorts of crazes. Some new comet shot across the sky each week. The "beautiful Misses Gunning," who were so successfully married, were not more of a furor than the beautiful Misses Jefferies and Blandy, who were so successfully hanged. Parsees and Brahmans came from the East, and Cherokees from the West, to say nothing of celebrities from the Continent, all to have their little day at Almack's with poets, painters, opera-singers, and other people suddenly become famous. Of course all the English provinces sent prodigies of wit or beauty to the metropolis, and even far-off Cornwall sent a boy painter. John Opie was his name. He was called the "Cornish Wonder," and he lasted for more than nine days.

Opie was born at St. Agnes, near Truro, and was the son of a carpenter. Like most of the English painters, he seems to have met with family discouragement in the matter of taking up art as a profession. But Opie insisted upon picture-making at the expense of carpentry, and was soon painting country lords and local folk at half a guinea a head. Dr. Wolcott (a writer known to fame as "Peter Pindar") was the first one to discover the young man's talent, and he not only gave him good advice, but took him into his house and provided him with money. In 1779 Opie and Wolcott went to Falmouth to improve their joint prospects, and a year or more afterward they went up to London. It seems that Wolcott, according to his own tale, had lost considerable money by the change of scene, and he entered into a written agreement with Opie that thereafter they should share fortune alike, Opie to work with

his brush and Wolcott to point out his wonderfulness with pen and tongue. The doctor certainly seems to have upheld his end of the bargain. Through Mrs. Boscawen, widow of Admiral Boscawen, he had Opie introduced at court. The king bought a picture, and commissions for portraits speedily followed from the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, Lady Salisbury, Lady Harcourt, and others. In addition, whenever the doctor dropped into poetry he had fine things to say about the prodigy. The gentle art of "booming" seemed easier in those days than in these, and a sonnet to a friend or an ode to the moon might contain an accidental allusion such as this:

> Speak, Muse. Who formed that matchless head,
> The Cornish boy, in tin-mines bred,
> Whose native genius, like her diamonds, shone
> In secret, till chance gave them to the sun?

How the "Cornish boy" kept his part of the agreement we do not know; but Wolcott says that, after a year of the partnership, "my pupil told me I could return to the country, as he could now do for himself."

But the doctor had already pushed the Wonder into notice. Reynolds had commended his work, and declared it like Caravaggio and Velasquez in one, and Walpole had ventured to say it was very like Rembrandt. When the young man met favor at court commissions came to him in a swarm, and a mob of fashionables went daft over his heads of beggars. The rage was violent while it lasted. Its subsidence was violent too, but it did not leave Opie totally neglected; some friends stood by him. He was a faithful worker, and he went on painting portraits with unabated energy. All his life he was a student, and in the end he became a painter of force and considerable invention. He was elected a Royal Academician, and in 1805 he was the Academy's professor of painting, delivering several rather remarkable discourses after the Reynolds initiative. In 1807, when he passed away, he was still, comparatively speaking, a young man, and yet he left as the result of his industry and perseverance some five hundred portraits and about two hundred and fifty compositions — historical and otherwise. He was married twice, the second Mrs. Opie being the novelist over whose productions our grandmothers shed some intermittent tears in the years past.

From the beginning Opie seems to have been an original char-

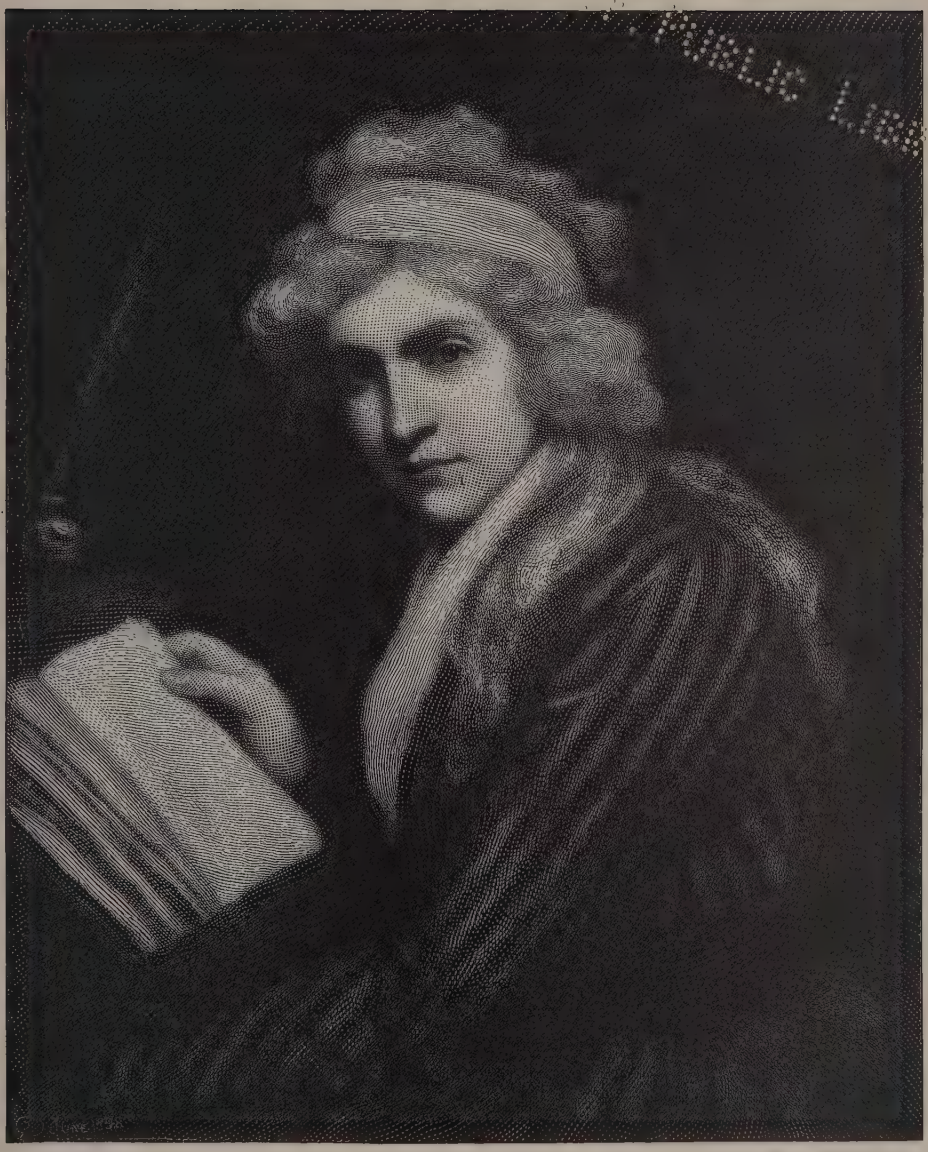
acter, following a path of his own with sincerity and belief. He had qualities that, under different circumstances of birth and education, might have proved him a genius in art, but unfortunately his insufficient training never allowed him full expression. He worked within cramped boundaries, and was at his best in simple problems like that of painting a portrait head. To be sure, he was always breaking through the boundaries into the field of historical painting; but it was with no great pictorial result. His Shaksperian compositions are heavy and uninteresting, or they are theatrical. It was from the theater and its stage setting that most of the painters got their compositions, and Opie was no exception in that respect. History in his hands fared little better than Shakspere. In the "Death of Becket" the murderers are clubbing and stabbing the archbishop as though he were a mad dog; the figure in the "Joan of Arc Proclaiming her Mission" rages like a maniac in a cell; and the "Murder of James I of Scotland," the "Murder of Rizzio," the "Beheading of Mary Queen of Scots," are all somewhat violent. Possibly the pictures are true enough to fact, but they are not true to art. There is some need of restraint even in the very whirlwind of passion. But then Opie was not a historical painter. The only man in the English school who knew enough about grouping figures in the historical canvas to make a composition was Etty, and the only painter of genre who knew how to put figures together with pictorial grace and charm and a lively sense of color was Stothard. Of course both Etty and Stothard had their defects of craftsmanship, but at least they had the right point of view.

As a portrait-painter Opie was something of a success because of his singleness of purpose and directness of method. He tried to paint exactly what was before him, without pretension or distortion. Moreover, he flattered no one, cultivated no type, and never tried to improve upon nature. There is a natural air and a personality about all of his sitters. Even the "Portrait of a Boy" in the National Gallery, which looks so poetic in the eyes and in the inclination of the head, is not an "ideal," not a type, by any means. It is a portrait painted from life rather than a form seen in the imagination. Then, too, there are no painter's artifices — petty little plays for effect — about Opie's work. His manner of seeing things is very simple, and the workmanship corresponds to the view. The impression gained from his portraits is that the large truths of the

personal presence are there — placed there as accurately as the painter's craftsmanship would allow.

How or where Opie got his craftsmanship would be difficult to say. The Royal Academy may have taught him something, but without doubt most of his method was of his own invention. There is nothing to indicate whence he got the bent toward broad masses of light and shade which Benjamin West so much admired. It is easy to say that he was influenced by Rembrandt and Caravaggio, but there is no record that he knew anything about either of these painters. Indeed, it is more reasonable to assume that his hand was rather coarse by nature, and that he painted in broad masses because he had not the delicacy to paint otherwise. He never at any time approximated a worker in cloisonné. His line was heavy, with little grace about it, his contours were square-turned, his light was wanting in subtlety, and his surfaces were rough and "painty." Yet perhaps these very defects made up his predominating feature — strength. The simplicity of the means gave the feeling of rugged power. Its resemblance to the strength of Velasquez, however, was entirely superficial. Opie was only a tyro with the brush where Velasquez was a passed master. There was a certain artlessness about his art that gave it an original force, and some of his most striking effects, if closely examined, will be found to result from untutored simplicity.

Opie's success, however, is not to be belittled. He could paint portraits, if not compositions, and some of his somber heads (for he was not brilliant in color or light) will hold their own with the Hoppners, the Romneys, and even the Lawrences. The portrait (supposed to be that of Mary Wollstonecraft, the wife of William Godwin and mother of the second Mrs. Shelley) which Mr. Cole has engraved is one of the best known of his works and is a most interesting character study. The reverie in which the subject seems steeped is well given, and both face and figure are seen and painted in a large way. The portrait of Mrs. Opie, in the National Portrait Gallery, is a little hard and smooth, but by no means wanting in attractiveness. Unfortunately the painter is not seen to advantage in the majority of his portraits in this gallery. The idea of Opie which one gathers from them is not entirely accurate. He was not a painter of many accomplishments, but he had sterling worth and considerable strength, together with the technical ability to make both strikingly manifest on occasion.



PORTRAIT OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT, BY JOHN OPIE.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

MARY GODWIN, better known under her family name of Wollstonecraft, was born April 27, 1759. The story of her life is interesting, pathetic, even tragic. Her father was a spendthrift, and the six children of his marriage soon left his house to better their fortunes. Mary, in 1778, became a companion to Mrs. Dawson. She afterward went to live with a friend named Fanny Blood, and in that family she helped at needlework. In 1783 she set up a school in Newington Green with her sister Mrs. Bishop. During this period she met Dr. Johnson and made many literary friends. Shortly afterward she wrote a pamphlet called "Thoughts on the Education of Daughters" that attracted some attention. She was a governess in the family of Lord Kingsborough for a year, then went to London and became reader and French translator to Johnson. Here, in 1791, she met William Godwin for the first time. The next year she published her "Vindication of the Rights of Woman," which was translated into French. It is said that at this time she was in love with Fuseli, the painter, who was already married, and wished to accompany Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Fuseli on a trip to Paris. The plan fell through, and Mary Wollstonecraft went alone to France in 1792. She met in Paris an American captain by the name of Imlay, who had abandoned the army for commercial pursuits. According to Leslie Stephen, "she agreed to live with him as his wife," and she joined him at Havre in the end of 1793. The relationship was most unfortunate. Imlay's business kept them separated, and she soon began to doubt his fidelity. She followed him to England in 1795, and in June of the same year sailed for Norway to make business arrangements for him. When she returned she found Imlay carrying on an intrigue with another woman, and tried to drown herself by leaping from Putney Bridge, but was rescued. She finally broke with him in 1796, refusing money, but taking a bond for the benefit of their daughter. No money was ever paid upon it. She returned to writing and literary society, and in 1797 she married William Godwin. The marriage was reasonably happy. The birth of her child, Mary, was fatal to her, and she died September 10, 1797. She published many books, political, social, and otherwise. She was a woman of great charm and fine personality; and her pathetic letters to Imlay show her a woman more sinned against than sinning.

Her portrait by Opie, which hangs in the National Gallery, London, is life-sized, and shows her seated in a reflective attitude before her desk, glancing up abstractedly from a manuscript she is perusing. Her whole air — the calm look of thought, the inclination of the head and body, her hand lightly touching the leaf that she is about to turn over, where the inkstand with its goose-quill is ready for use — is characteristic of the writer in a brown study, and well chosen and arranged by the artist, even to the corner of the book that goes out of the picture.

The dress is blue-striped on a dark warm gray ground of a soft quality, and floats gently into the background, which is of a bituminous depth and richness. The tone of the book is mellow, as of an old manuscript, and does not receive as strong a light as the face. The scarf

about the neck and shoulders and the band upholding the hair are of a warm bluish-gray color. The hair is gray as though powdered, and of a frizzly texture. The tone of the flesh is warm and mellow in its breadth of light; the countenance is pale, as of one used to a sedentary life. But the features lack the refinement of treatment and subtlety of modeling of the highest art; they are heavy and want mobility, suggesting rather the mechanical labor of the drawing-school than the freedom and artlessness of the perfect master.

T. C.

GEORGE MORLAND

CHAPTER X

GEORGE MORLAND

(1763–1804)

GEORGE MORLAND might be used as an illustration in the argument for heredity. His grandfather and father were painters of some note before him; it is said they were both gifted with convivial and somewhat inelegant tastes; and one of them at least had, late in life, fallen into the unlucky habit of not paying his debts. These traits of the fathers were about the only legacy left to the son, but he improved them in high degree. He was by all odds the best painter of the family, certainly the most accomplished drinker, and he proved as complacent a bankrupt as ever sat in a debtor's prison. One hardly finds it in conscience to say harsh things about him, because from the beginning he seems to have been an irresponsible sort of a person—a blind follower of a bad precedent and suffering from too much ancestry.

Strange tales are told of Morland's childhood—of his marvelous drawings at three years of age, of his being locked in a room and made to paint while his father sold his pictures, of his carousals with companions when he could escape the paternal vigilance. No one knows how true the stories may be, but it seems certain that the boy received only a haphazard education at the hands of his father, and that he began working for money at an early age. During his life he never ceased to work for money. At seventeen he had something of a reputation, had been presented to Reynolds, and was an honorary exhibitor at the Royal Academy; but the dealers got all his pictures. At twenty-one, when he left his father and set up for himself, he did so in a dealer's house. The demand for his pictures was large. He sold them on the easel as fast as he could paint them, and on the proceeds dressed like a

dandy, bought horses, affected the gentleman; and yet about his only associates were pot-boys, pugilists, and jockeys. He had a blathering contempt for nobility and society, and scorned anything that might tend to elevate or restrain him. At one time Mrs. Fitzherbert was fond of his work and would have patronized him, but Morland never improved the opportunity. He preferred his tavern friends, his horses, and his gin.

Started early on this devil-may-care course, he left it only once, and that temporarily. He broke away from London, went to Margate, where he painted miniatures, and finally found his way to France. He soon returned to London, took lodgings in Kensal Green, and fell in love with a sister of William Ward. They were married, and at the same time Ward married Morland's sister. The two couples went to housekeeping together, and for a time Morland seemed a veritable case of reformation. He worked with persistence and purpose, went to the Isle of Wight and made studies of the sea-coast, and painted pictures in series, after the initiative of Hogarth, that sold far and wide in engravings. He had become famous as a story-teller in paint with such work as the "Letitia" series, and was on the road to rank and position in the world of art. But he could not hold up under the weight of decency and prosperity. Besides, the women quarreled in the house (as is the habit of tenants in common), and when the Morlands moved into Great Portland Street the painter once more took up with the bottle. Of course his wife was soon neglected, and finally he began to cultivate the happy-go-lucky fashion of walking off and leaving her for months at a time. It seems that he put in his days and nights wandering about from shop to tavern; and she, poor soul, being both fond and foolish, spent most of her life following him about the town.

The tale runs on that at this time Morland was scarcely ever sober. Hard working and hard drinking, dealers and debts, horses and low company, were the chief ingredients in what has been called his "gay life." Yet it is remarkable the number and excellence of the pictures he painted during the twenty years of his suicidal career. It is remarkable, too, how actually overrun he was by popular favor. People fought for the privilege of buying his pictures. Upward of two hundred and fifty of them were engraved, and the popularity of the black-and-white reproductions was almost as great as that of the originals. When the plates were worn down

THE HALT, BY GEORGE MORLAND.

LOUVRE, PARIS.

so that they would no longer make a good impression with black ink, they were used to print the colored engraving so much in demand in these present times. Half of the old colored prints now in the United States were made after the pictures of Morland.

Of course, with such phenomenal success, Morland soon grew careless. He lost in drawing and in color, and by way of supplying the demand he sold pictures from his easel that were little more than half finished. He had a brother who was a painter and a dealer as well, and he allowed this brother to copy his pictures by the dozen and sell them as originals. It is said that Morland actually signed the copies with his name, but whether the story is true or not no one can now say. It is not improbable. What little moral sense the painter ever possessed was destroyed early in life by gin. The only good thing about him was his painting.

With his large sales of pictures and engravings, Morland's income must have been considerable; yet he was always in debt, and had to keep moving about London to elude the bailiffs. They caught up with him in 1799, and it was not until 1802 that he was released from prison under the Insolvent Debtors' Act. His habits had not improved, and his left hand had become palsied; but he still painted, a bottle on one side of him and his color-box on the other. He was soon arrested again, and while under restraint died suddenly in a sponging-house in Eyre Street on October 27, 1804. His poor wife was so overcome by his death that she died three days later, and the pair were buried together. Morland seems to have nursed no sentimental delusions about himself or his career. He was aware of his failings, and the epitaph he wrote for himself was: "Here lies a drunken dog."

The product of such a life is difficult to summarize. There is always an appeal from Morland drunk to Morland sober, but, drunk or sober, Morland had some human element at the bottom of his art, or he would never have had his popular success. He was one of the people, and he painted as best he could the life of the people. Women and children, cottage life, tavern scenes, stables, horses, cattle, pigs, smugglers, boats, coast scenes,—in fact, almost every genre imaginable,—came from his brush and found a welcome with his public. If Morland believed in anything, he believed in his surroundings, and was sincere in painting them. Then, besides his popular subjects, his pictures had a story to tell and a moral to point—features which have always been fetching with the masses.

It was cheap enough story-telling, to be sure,—a sort of penny-dreadful literature in paint,—but when have the masses ever rebelled against that? In fact, the sentiment of Morland's stories was the most acceptable feature of his art. An audience that accepted the emotional claptrap peculiar to Mrs. Opie's heroines was not one to find fault with Morland's half-baked pathos about the "Lass of Livingston" or the "African Slave-trade." Artistically the excessive sentiment stood for Morland drunk, but popularly it represented Morland sober, and was heartily relished.

But aside from such extraneous features of Morland's pictures there was a painter's reason for their popularity. They show a remarkable sense of the picturesque. It is not given to every one to see the world pictorially, and Morland saw everything composed, painted, and hanging upon the wall — a stable-yard as well as a drawing-room, a litter of pigs as well as a band of children playing at soldiers. How gracefully his women and children group themselves in oval frames! How picturesque appears his wayside inn with the romantic traveler on horseback, the maid with the pot of ale, the horse-boy, the dogs, and all that! Then the sea with its waves, the tossing ship, the rocky shore, and the landing smugglers — how charmingly he focused the scene! There seemed no limit to his invention. He could group almost anything and make a picture of it. He had the pictorial sense — the painter's point of view.

His hand was perhaps less cunning than his eye, and yet he was very clever in composition and in brush-work. He could arrange groups of young girls, with graceful swirling lines, upon a square of canvas almost as shrewdly as a Watteau, and his figures in the courtyard of an inn seem each one in the right place as regards light and color. But of course he had small knowledge of anatomy and was deficient in drawing. He drew "out of his head," and where line failed him he substituted a patch of color. Perspective bothered him, and he seldom gave the planes of a picture with correctness. The landscape of the background often came creeping into the foreground, or one side of the picture did not agree with the other side, because the true values were not given. The lighting of his pictures was almost as arbitrary as was that of Rembrandt. That is to say, he focused light sharply upon certain objects, like a white dress, a white horse, or a white dog. From this central spot he generally caused the illumination to radiate into

shadow. The "Stable Interior," which Mr. Cole has engraved, is a good illustration of this. It is one of the painter's largest and most important pictures.

Morland was perhaps shrewder in the matter of color than in either line or light. Not that he knew its depths, but that he handled it with facility and taste, often producing pictures of a color quality akin to the work of Hogarth. He was not, however, so masterful in color as Hogarth. His reds and blues and golden browns were harmonious enough, but they rang deeper and clearer notes in the hands of the painter of the "Harlot's Progress." Perhaps Morland's greatest excellence was his ability with the brush. He could cover over defects very prettily by his cunning surfaces. A luring quality of texture or color in animals, people, or buildings blinded people's eyes to the want of drawing. All of his great predecessors were somewhat like him in this respect. They were clever handlers of the brush, though they knew not impeccable drawing.

It is not possible to state the sources of Morland's artistic knowledge. His father was his first and apparently his only master, and what the son gained from him can only be conjectured. Doubtless when in France the painter was influenced by Greuze and the graceful sentimental subject then in vogue. Some of his compositions of young girls show a soubrette type that is more French than English. He has been likened to Steen the Dutchman; but about the only sentiment they had in common was a love for drink. The resemblance between their subjects and their painting lies entirely upon the surface. Likely enough Morland knew and studied Dutch pictures in London, and was possibly drawn to them. It is said that his father made him copy them when a boy. But as for imitating them or following them, there is no proof of it in his work. He was an English painter, and painted the life about him in the manner common to all the painters of the school.

Again, it is not possible to trace his styles of painting with any accuracy. His life was too much of a nightmare, too much of a snarl, to unravel from it dates, styles, and periods. It is recorded that he threw off upward of four thousand pictures; but when, where, and how, the canvases do not tell. It seems probable that at first he painted young girls in white, seated in groups at tambour-work or other domestic occupations. They are marvels of grace, charm, and refinement of taste, as are also his groups of chil-

dren and his boys at play. Later on he took up such subjects as sea-pieces with smugglers on the coast, tavern courts, stables, horses, dogs, pigs. His touch grew heavy, and his theme seemed to have changed for the worse, but he never lost his refinement of feeling and his sense of delicate color. These qualities, which may be revealed in the flesh color of a pig as well as in anything else, remained with him to the end of his brutish life. It was a strange life for a human being to live, strange above all for a painter; and yet it was not without its saving grace, its scrap of beauty flashing like a jewel from the gutter.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

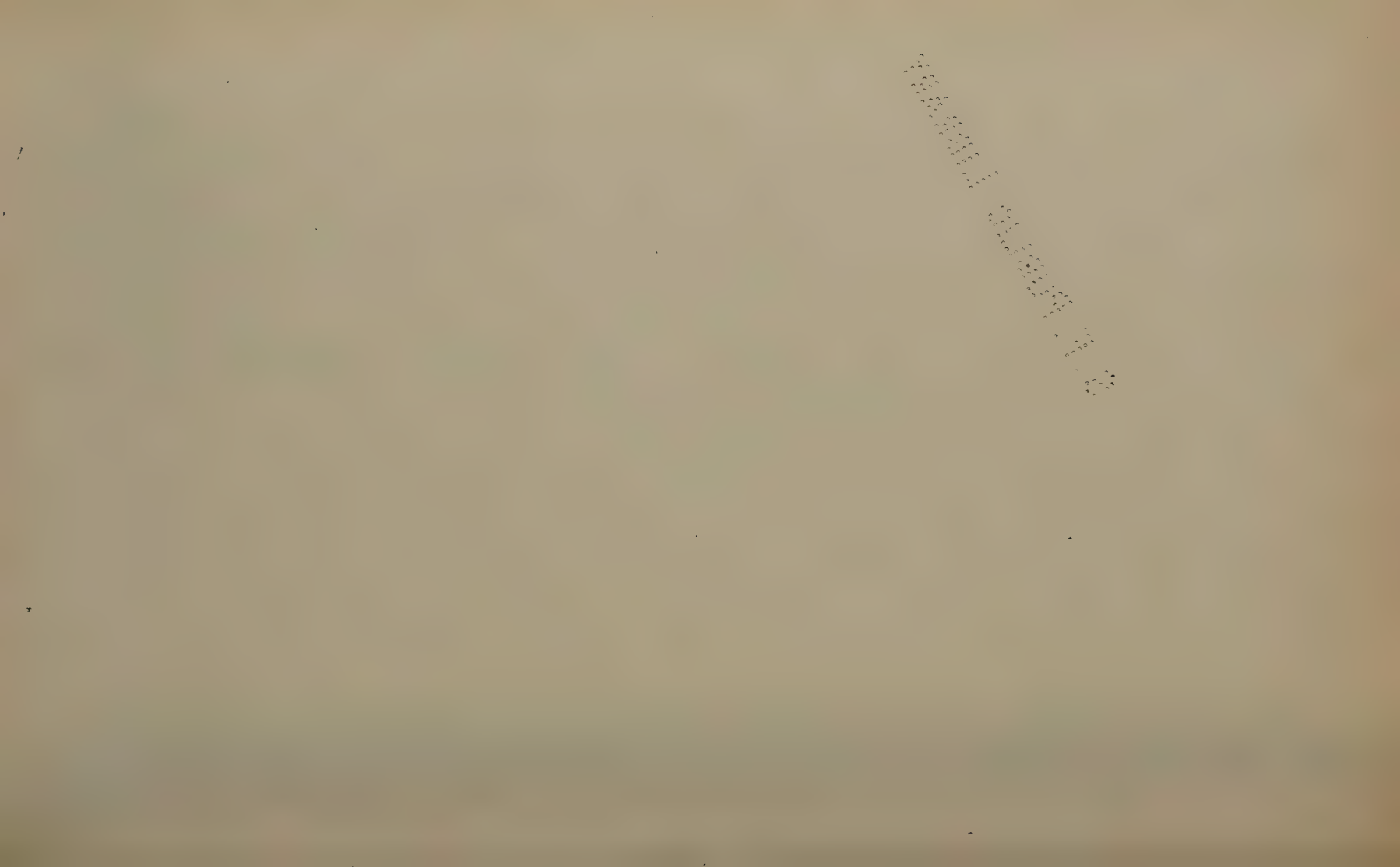
MORLAND'S "Stable Interior" is said to represent that of the White Lion Inn at Paddington, whereabout the artist at one time dwelt. The picture is an example of his best period, doubtless the finest instance of it, since it is rated by connoisseurs as his masterpiece. It was painted in 1791, and exhibited the same year at the Royal Academy, from which place it was purchased by the Rev. Sir Henry Bate Dudley, Bart., and falling into the possession of that gentleman's nephew, Mr. Thomas Birch Wolfe, it was in 1877 presented by him to the National Gallery, London.

It is a magnificent work. The subtle mystery of enveloping air and light pervading the interior gloom is rendered with an appreciation for breadth and repose; the masses are well preserved; there is no confusion, spottiness, or petty markings and exaggerated spots of local color; the white horse, which arrests the eye first thing, does not protrude, but lies in its place in the atmosphere, not only because it is a true value, but because of the cunning handling of its contours, which have the vanishings and accents of nature, and because, also, of the aërial softness with which the background is modulated in places as it approaches them. The whole of the shadowed space, with its heavy woodwork, rafters, and details all delicately suggested — such as the wheelbarrow, spade, and brush broom, markings of the boards and manger, even to the basket lodged above in the dim corner of the transverse beam, is modeled with rare feeling for depth and chiaroscuro. There is no mean anxiety shown for small particulars, yet in the impression of the whole nothing is left in a vague, half-true, half-realized condition; neither does it degenerate from a fine poetic seeing into mere laborious handiwork. In the touch of landscape without he endeavors to show the sparkle of sunlight upon the leaves of the trees, though in no mean way, and designed, I fancy, rather as a bit of texture to accentuate the quietude of the shade within.

The composition is distinctly an arrangement. The lantern and object hanging above it break the disagreeableness which the straight line of the doorway, without this device, would make. Then, too, the position of the wheelbarrow varies what otherwise would be an unpleasant repetition of so many horses' legs; it also adds fullness, and as a characteristic accessory is of interest in itself. The farther window is latticed and receives but little light, being shaded by the outer foliage; the near window, how-

STABLE INTERIOR, BY GEORGE MORLAND.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.



ever, is draped with an old cloth, through which the light sifts dimly. Had these two windows, situated as they are on either side of the main entrance, been left bare, not only would the present variety be wanting, but think how unpleasantly the square of the large door would be repeated in them! But by the present contrivance the light is also concentrated upon the principal objects of interest. In like manner are all the parts disposed and studied, and care taken to avoid overcrowding.

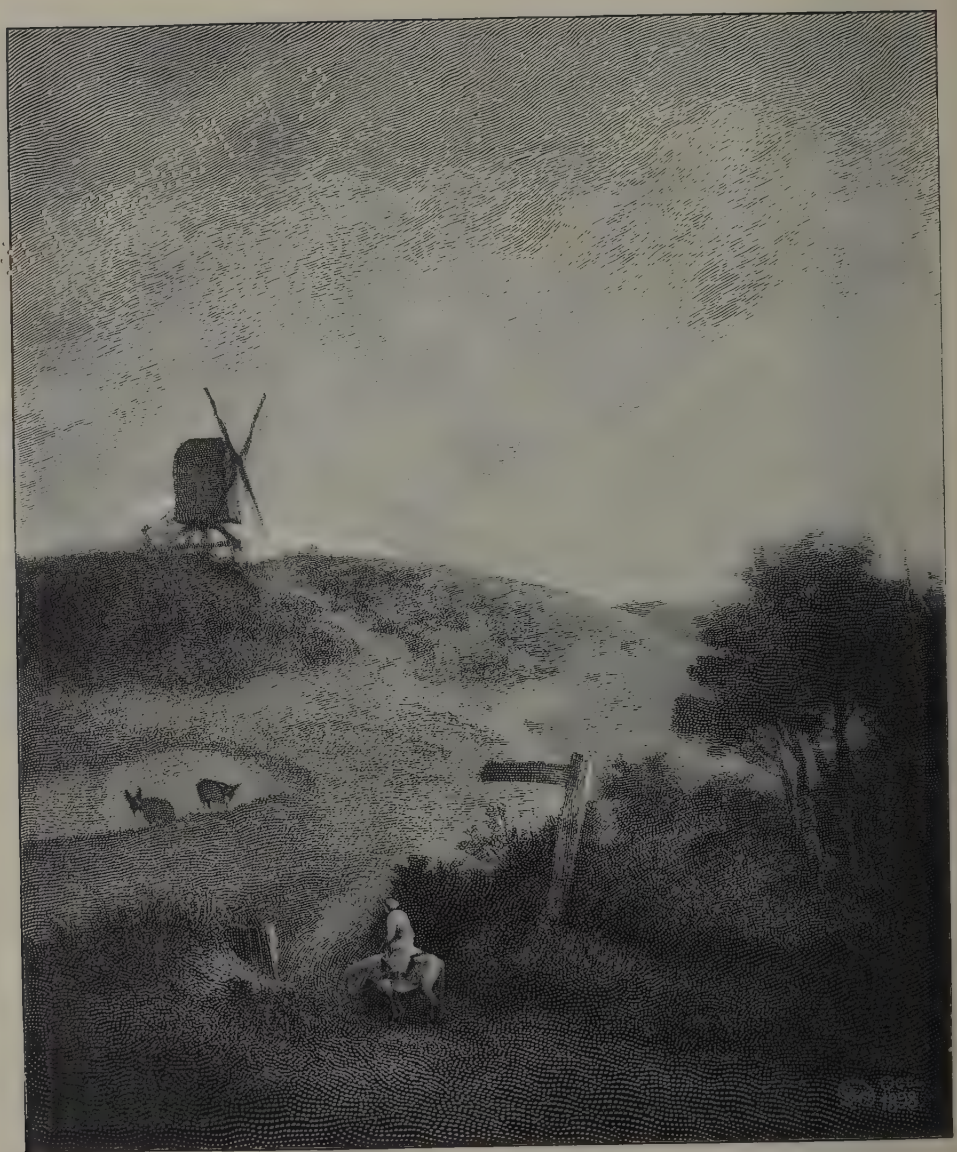
Morland's coloring, like all good, sound painting, is well grounded in light and shade, and much of his finest quality is therefore capable of translation into black and white. But no process of color-printing could ever convey the least idea of the refinement of paint, so exquisitely balanced between warm and cool tones, that prevails in this canvas of the "Stable Interior," upon whose sensitive surface anything like black would show up as a brutality; neither could it give any adequate notion of the flood of mellow light that from the hazy blue sky silvers the foliage and, permeating with a cool softness the depths of the inclosure, brings into gentle yet strong relief the neutral brown of the one horse and pony, and the warm white of the other, and delicately relieves the boy in grayish red and the man in blue.

Morland's drawing is the poorest part of his art: the figures here are ill proportioned, and his horses are round, and want the accentuation that a little knowledge of anatomy would contribute to them. But he touched no new problems. His works are like those of the Dutchmen, but lack their probity of design and their sensitive balance of values.

"The Halt," which is among the collection of English pictures in the long gallery of the Louvre at Paris, is a falling off from the high-water mark of the previous picture, being browner in tone — of the "brown-fiddle" tendency. The same fullness and charming picturesqueness of composition is here, and fills the eye with an agreeable sense of proportion. This rare gift Morland had intuitively.

T. C.

JOHN CROME



THE WINDMILL, BY JOHN CROME.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

CHAPTER XI

JOHN CROME, CALLED "OLD CROME"

(1768–1821)

THE origins of the early English landscape are not difficult to trace. There are three names that stand for three stages of its progress. Wilson had founded it, following the classic precedent of Claude; Gainsborough had added to it the Dutch and Flemish traditions: but it remained for Crome to English it and make it live. Crome, the Norwich provincial, who knew little of tradition and less of school training, produced the most vital landscape of his time, possibly because of his provincialism. Without precept or preceptor, painting "Mousehold Heath" because it was before him, in his own manner because no teacher was behind him, Crome builded much better than he knew. In rendering certain features of landscape, such as space, sky, and light, he has not been surpassed. Modern painters have sought to reproduce these features by academic rule, but the "Windmill" in the National Gallery will to-day stand up against them all. Its sky and light are perfect—and that is using the last word in the vocabulary.

Crome was born at Norwich, in the east of England, in December, 1768. He was the son of a poor weaver, and is said to have received little or no schooling. At twelve he was an errand-boy for a country physician named Rigby, and at fifteen he had apprenticed himself for seven years to Francis Whisler, a coach-, sign-, and house-painter. Later on he developed a taste for landscape-painting and a friendship for a printer's prentice, also artistically inclined, named Ladbrooke. They took a garret together and began the practice of art, Ladbrooke painting portraits at five shillings a head, and Crome landscapes at thirty shillings. This was about the time Crome finished his years of apprenticeship, but he did not immediately abandon his trade. Mr. Reeve, at Nor-

wich (to whom I am indebted for much valuable information about Crome and Cotman), has a bill of Crome's for painting the sign of the Maid's Head Tavern, two pounds fourteen; and the bill is dated May 27, 1803. Crome was then thirty-four, and though he had little money he had made some friends. Among others, a Mr. Harvey had introduced him as a drawing-master to people in Norfolk, and had allowed him to study pictures in his gallery; Sir William Beechey, in London, had taken an interest in him and given him instruction; and Opie had also helped him.

Crome at this time was married (he and Ladbrooke having married sisters by the name of Bernay), and there were already hostages to fortune in the shape of daughters and sons. The family grew large; the painter found himself tied down hand and foot to Norwich, and he could do little more than eke out a meager existence by teaching drawing in his native town, and selling pictures whenever an opportunity offered. This he did for some years, and gradually he drew about him what interest and what talent for art there was in the Norfolk country. Thus came to be formed the first provincial school of painters in England, though probably the interested parties never thought of themselves as a "school," or fancied that they were developing a "movement" in art. The artistic interest thus awakened finally crystallized in the "Norwich Society," the aim of which was "an inquiry into the rise, progress and present state of Painting, Architecture and Sculpture with a view to point out the best methods of study and to attain to greater perfection in these arts." Cotman, Vincent, Stark, Stannard, Thirtle belonged to it. It was in sort an art club that met every fortnight to study books, drawings, and engravings, and to discuss art, possibly after the postprandial manner known to artists of the present day. It was certainly not an extravagant club, for the refreshments were limited to bread and cheese, the bill for which was assumed by each member in turn. The society soon blossomed out into exhibitions, the first of which was held in a room of Sir Benjamin Wrench's court — a wretched place known in local parlance as the "Hole-in-the-Wall." In it were shown two hundred and twenty-three works in oil and water-color, of which Crome contributed over twenty. This was in 1803. The exhibitions continued annually, with some interruptions, until 1833, and during that time Crome sent to them some two hundred and eighty-eight pictures.

Aside from these home interests, Crome occasionally ran up to London, but he did not send anything to the Royal Academy until 1806, and, all told, never exhibited more than twenty pictures there. He wandered in England a little. In 1802 he was with the Gurneys as drawing-master while making a tour of the Lakes; in 1805 he was on the Wye, in 1806 at Weymouth. Eight years later he made a short trip to Belgium and France. Doubtless his glimpse of foreign art had some influence upon him. He may have seen and studied Dutch, French, and Italian landscape art on the Continent, but he showed none of the study in his painting. His style was formed before he crossed the Channel, and he did not change materially during the rest of his life. At fifty-three he died suddenly in his native town of Norwich, and the tale is told that his last words were, "Hobbema, my dear Hobbema, how I have loved you!"

The story of Crome's last words, like many another pretty story in art, may be labeled, "Interesting if true." But there are two good reasons for doubting its truth. In the first place, they are not the sort of words nor do they express the kind of sentiment the dying usually give utterance to; and, in the second place, there is very slight trace of Crome's love for Hobbema in his landscapes, where of all places it might reasonably be expected to show. Yet writer after writer has put it down that Crome based his art upon that of Hobbema. There is just a shade of truth in the statement, because Crome did know Hobbema's work at second hand, as we shall note in a moment; but at best it takes some stretch of the imagination to see similarity in the pictures of the two men. Their schemes of light and color are totally different, and in tree-drawing the only resemblance is that they are both wearisome in detail. Crome was self-taught in the sense that he had no master; but naturally he took a bias from pictures seen at Norwich and thereabout, and his first artistic love was an Englishman, Richard Wilson. He never outgrew this first love. Almost all of his works —even the very late ones—show the golden sky and mellow light of Wilson, newly studied, enhanced, and more sensitively portrayed. Again, many of them are composed after Wilson's manner, and have his feeling for space beyond rocks or hills. In fact, no one would suspect Hobbema in the case if it were not for that last-words story. Crome's etchings, which are the poorest part of his output, are perhaps more Dutch in their look than his paintings;

but all these hints at Dutch derivation may be traced to an English source—the art of Gainsborough.

Crome was twenty years of age when Gainsborough died, and surely he must have heard of the famous painter who had come from the Suffolk country, so near at hand. The tale is told that the celebrated "Cottage Door" by Gainsborough belonged to Crome's earliest patron, Mr. Harvey, who gave Crome the privileges of his gallery for purposes of study. It would thus seem that Gainsborough was an earlier influence in the painter's life than Wilson, but, early or late, he certainly was an influence. The "brown-fiddle" tree, the dark shadow, the flickering light on foliage, the reflecting pool of water, came from Gainsborough; and even that sharpness of drawing, that brittleness of bough and niggling of leafage in Crome, which have been attributed to Hobbema, doubtless came from such Gainsborough imitations of the Dutchman as the "Cornard Woodland" in the National Gallery.

Crome was, to be sure, something of a follower, as every painter must be; but he followed his own countrymen, and, what is more, he improved upon them. To their knowledge he added an individual intelligence of no mean order. His sense of light in the sky and movement in the clouds was most keen, his grasp of the height and depth of space was profound, and his poetry of aërial distance was little short of sublime. Accepting art as a convention,—a something far removed from the reality,—he nevertheless insisted upon its revealing truths of his own seeing. The "Mousehold Heath" he painted for "air and space," and he achieved them as Gainsborough and Wilson never did. The roll of the hills and the distance beyond them are superb; the sky as originally painted must have been superb, too, but it is now so rubbed that it has lost its depth and aërial luminosity. An art device borrowed from Wilson, rather than his own knowledge, led him to mar the picture by a wholly conventional foreground, and the cattle were put in by another hand after Crome's death. But notwithstanding these shortcomings, notwithstanding the picture having been painted upon two pieces of canvas so badly stitched together that they came apart, notwithstanding rubbing, cleaning, and repainting, the "Mousehold Heath," as it hangs to-day in the National Gallery, is a landscape of wonderful charm and beauty.

And yet this picture is perhaps not so complete in every way as the "Windmill," in which the best features of Crome are re-

MOUSEHOLD HEATH, BY JOHN CROME.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

vealed. It has already been said that the light and sky of this picture are "perfect." No painter has ever gone beyond it. Rembrandt in his landscapes could force this evening light into a central glare by dark borderings of storm-clouds, and Corot could diffuse it over the whole upper half of his canvas in a way that suggested more than it revealed: but neither of them told it with the plain, simple truth of Crome. And no one ever told with better effect the depth of the air, the far look into space over the ridge of a hill, the reach of aërial distance. The superlative statement in art criticism is usually dangerous, but one may venture it about Crome's light and aërial space. They remain unexcelled to this day.

His trees and foliage, after all has been said in their favor, excite small enthusiasm. They are "drawn," to be sure, but with a brittle brush and a tedious insistence upon the infinitely little. The breadth and depth of a tree such as Rousseau painted Crome seems never to have comprehended. The "Poringland Oak," fine masterpiece as it is, is a case to the point. It is not the better for its many-pronged branches. The sky, the light, the air, the water, are living; but the tree, for all its characterization as an oak, is dead and petrified. And yet, by way of contradiction, there is the "Skirts of the Forest," in the South Kensington Museum, with trees that are without the slightest trace of torturing, without detail work of any kind. Crome could paint with a broad, flat brush at times, but it was not his usual practice. The "Slate Quarries," in the National Gallery, is another illustration of breadth and simplicity of masses quite worthy of a Courbet. The free handling in this picture extends even into the foreground; and yet, as a rule, Crome's foregrounds are petrified, the flowers, the weeds, and the grasses being cut patterns rather than natural growths. Crome has always been praised for these icicle-like drawings of tree and shrub, but they would seem to be his least praiseworthy features. His originality, his invention, his skill, seem best shown in the light of morning and evening, in the sweep of hills, in the air of the sea-coast, in the sluggish waters of rivers and harbors, with sails and buildings against golden skies and white clouds.

Many subjects found their way upon Crome's canvases. He painted almost every kind of view to be found in and about Norfolk. Any one who travels up to Norwich will see his landscapes at almost any turn of the road. He liked sand-dunes, quarries,

wood interiors, single trees on a heath. The banks of the Wensum and the Yare he painted many times. The meadows with slow moving rivers, an idle boat with drooping sails, the coast with docks, the open sea, all appealed to him. They were usually calm scenes with still evening skies, warm in their yellows and grays, and fine in their atmospheric effects. Crome was not flamboyant in color, and yet in a limited sense he was something of a colorist. His palette scarcely held more than pale yellow, dull green, golden brown, and silvery grays, but with these few notes he could produce color-schemes of great delicacy and charm.

His method of painting was simple but skilful. He based his pictures in warm neutral tints, and then overlaid his lights and shadows with a meager brush. He thus gained much warmth and color from the background. If it was a dark, shadowed effect that he wished, he underbased in dark. This was sometimes attended by unhappy results, the "Carrow Abbey" and the "Dawn" at Norwich, for instances, being much blackened by the disintegration of the surface pigments. Some of his pictures are so thinly painted that the weave of the canvas is disagreeably prominent. He was not a painter given to thick impasto. All his effects are produced by simple and direct means.

During his life there was little recognition came to him from the public, and even after his death the celebrated "Mousehold Heath" sold for only one pound. But he was acclaimed by his pupils and followers, though they out-heroded him in the matter of niggling tree-foliage. Possibly they loved him for his faults, which not infrequently happens in art-worship; but, at any rate, they called him master and placed him at the head of the Norwich school. In recent times the picture collector has created a large demand for Crome's works.[1] England has been ransacked for

[1] George Borrow, in his "Lavengro," has a eulogy and a prediction about Crome that is perhaps worth repeating: "A living master? Why, there he comes! Thou hast had him long; he has long guided thy young hand toward the excellence which is yet far from thee, but which thou canst attain if thou shouldst persist and wrestle, even as he has done, amid gloom and despondency — aye, and even contempt. He who now comes up the creaking stair to this little studio in the second floor to inspect thy last effort before thou departest, the little stout man whose face is very dark and whose eye is vivacious, that man has attained excellence destined some day to be acknowledged, though not until he is cold and his mortal part returned to its kindred clay. He has painted, not pictures of the world, but English pictures such as Gainsborough himself might have done: beautiful rural pieces with trees which might well tempt the wild birds to perch upon them. Thou needest not run to Rome, brother, where lives the old Mariolater, after pictures of the world, while at home there are pictures of England; nor needest thou even go to London, the big city, in search of a master; for thou hast one at home, in the old East Anglican town, who can instruct thee while thou needest instruction. Better stay

them, and many a Stark or Vincent or Bernay Crome has answered the requisition. A posthumous fame is perhaps preferable to none at all, but Crome deserved better of his age and generation. He had his limitations, but he was not the less a genius.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

THERE could scarcely be a better instance, for the art student, of the meaning of "tone" in painting than the picture of the "Windmill" by "Old Crome" affords, in the prevailing color of the atmosphere that envelops and bathes its brightest portion as its darkest, uniting all its surface in one hue. A beautiful ensemble charms the eye, as on those rare occasions of sunset when the air, heavy with moisture, is flooded with golden light, and the circumambient fluid — molding all in one element — transforms the meanest post or fence, and imparts to everything a face of mellowed richness.

By the medium of a veil of lovely yellow light, one might say, Crome gives us, in the "Windmill," the subtle nuances of gray and purple clouds that lose themselves mysteriously in modeled depths of airy space; the brown and amber earth spotted with heather and shrub, and fading by imperceptible gradations into the blue of distant hills; and the varied play and interchange of green foliage. Such a delightful harmony of tints, and such a happy tone over all, giving enchantment and ideality to the fair region! How well Crome understood the avoidance of all petty markings and exaggerated spots of local coloring, to the attainment of the mystery of enveloping air and light — of poetic beauty, in short!

But though Crome's style exhibits a simplicity and breadth of view, so far as landscape, pure and simple, is concerned, it nevertheless is poor and dry with respect to the figures which he often introduces into them, since he here employs a false kind of definition, belonging to the convention of outline-drawing rather than to that of full-toned oil-painting. The relative truths of definition, so far as trees, shrubs, etc., are concerned, are maintained with breadth and fullness according to the planes of the aërial perspective of these things; but this truth fails to be applied to animated objects, for the reason, probably, that as the artist was not at home in the drawing of such objects, his anxiety upon this score led him to observe them more narrowly than he otherwise would have done, and consequently to give a modeling, and light and shade, to distant figures too small to properly exhibit such phenomena in keeping with his breadth of other parts. The distant cattle, for instance, in "Mousehold Heath" are not big things seen far off, but rather little miniatures near at hand, compelled by perspective to occupy a false position on

at home, brother, at least for a season, and toil and strive 'mid groanings and despondency till thou hast attained excellence even as he has done — the little dark man with the brown coat and the top-boots, whose name will one day be considered the chief ornament of the old town, and whose works will at no distant period rank among the proudest pictures of England — and England against the world! Thy master, my brother, thy at present all too little considered master — Crome."

I am indebted to the Rev. George McClellan Fiske of Providence for calling my attention to this tribute by Borrow.

the canvas[1] — not with respect to color, however, for his figures never jar upon the general tone, and his light and shade are masterful. The "Windmill" is painted on wood, three feet eight inches high by three feet wide. The view is said to be situated probably on Mousehold Heath near Norwich.

The large painting of "Mousehold Heath," which is likewise, with the "Windmill," to be seen in the National Gallery, London, is five feet eleven inches wide by three feet seven inches high. This picture is said to have been bought at one time by a dealer who, with the idea of turning his purchase to better account, cut it in half and sold it, or tried to sell it, as two different works. Fortunately, the two halves were bought by some more intelligent person, who reunited them; but the crack can still plainly be seen down the middle of the work. This subject was painted, as the artist once remarked, for the sake of "air and space"; he aimed also at a more silvery tone — at the pure light of day: both of which results he has achieved to a remarkable degree. There is plenty of breathing-room here on these rolling hills, and rest for the eyes; it is like a glimpse of the ocean itself. The repose of evening is here also; air slumbers:

> Stealthy withdrawings, interminglings mild
> Of light with shade in beauty reconciled —
> Such is the prospect far as sight can range.

T. C.

[1] Mr. Cole's objection to the cattle is well taken, but Crome cannot be held responsible for them. They were added by another hand after Crome's death.— V. D.

JOHN SELL COTMAN

THE BREAKDOWN, BY JOHN SELL COTMAN.

COLLECTION OF THE LATE J. J COLMAN, ESQ., NORWICH.

CHAPTER XII

JOHN SELL COTMAN

(1782–1842)

THE pictures attributed to Cotman that one sees about London give a decidedly false impression of that painter. He is not adequately represented in any public gallery. Only in such private collections as those of Mr. Reeve and the late Mr. Colman[1] at Norwich do we meet with the true Cotman; and he proves a very different man from the Cotman of the National Gallery. The impression of Dutch influence that one gets from the London pictures is peculiarly misleading. Cotman had little or no affinity with the Netherland painters. His shore and river pieces suggest nothing of Van der Neer, and his marines are guiltless of any influence from Van de Velde or Backhuisen. A painter of great variety, he dealt with many subjects—the architecture of church, castle, and bridge, landscapes with windmills, woods and plains, rivers and harbors with boats, the open sea in rough weather; but in all of these he was distinctly English. Mr. Binyon in his "Portfolio" monograph gives his artistic lineage correctly. He was like Girtin in method, often like Turner in subjects and composition, sometimes suggestive of Bonington in color.

But with his artistic descent determined, Cotman is by no means an easy painter to epitomize. He rather eludes the pen that would pin him down or sum him up. His varied point of view, his remarkable versatility, his frequent changes of subject and method, are all somewhat confusing; and when one has traced him through many years of production the impression left is a little indefinite. The feeling is that of an aspiring spirit that has turned and doubled many times under many impulses. There are bursts of

[1] The Colman pictures have recently passed by request to the Castle Museum at Norwich.

strength indicative of genius, even of greatness. But the flight of the arrow is not true; it gyrates, wavers in the breeze, and finally sinks to earth, falling short of the goal. At least, such is the conclusion that one arrives at from a study of Cotman's work, though it must not be thought for a moment that he was a failure. In his own eyes, doubtless, he was anything but a success; but those who knew him in life,—his fellow-artists, for instance,—and those who have come to study him in recent years, will not tolerate any such estimate. He perhaps lacked in singleness of aim, definiteness of purpose; but he was not the less a genius who, under more favorable circumstances, might have soared in splendor with Turner, or fathomed the larger truths of nature with Millet.

Cotman hardly belongs to the Norwich school, though he was born at Norwich, May 16, 1782. His father was a silk merchant, and his son was destined to succeed him in the business; but the love of art intervened. After an academic education at the Norwich Grammar School, he was sent up to London to study painting, and there he soon became a companion of the young artists who met at Dr. Munro's. The doctor was a philanthropist who did what he could for the young painters by opening a boys' sketch club, paying the members something like a half-crown an evening for sketching, and giving them a supper in the bargain. It was here that Cotman met Girtin, Turner, De Wint, and others. They were all young. Turner and Girtin were but twenty-two, and Cotman only fifteen. Naturally he was much impressed by the two older students. Girtin was his admiration as regards method, and as water-color was the medium of them all, Cotman took it up from necessity. The medium was new at that time, and for this reason alone there was at first some similarity of subject and style among the young students; but as they gained in facility, individuality began to assert itself, and the individuality that seemed to impress Cotman more than any other was that of Turner.

Cotman never outgrew or cared to outgrow a certain bent of mind which he perhaps got from Turner. Possibly a love for ideal landscape, towering castles, cathedral spires against the sunset, mountains, great skies, and seas, came by birth to both painters. At any rate, the classic composition, with all its lofty sentiment and color splendor, which we know as the Turnerian landscape, was an ideal of Cotman's which he strove to realize for many years. It was substantially the same subject and the same point of view in

the pictures of both men, but differently expressed in each case by virtue of an individuality. Cotman was no imitator of Turner, but he saw the beauty and the mystery of Turnerian light, distance, and color, and naturally, being young and impressionable, he could not help being influenced by them.

In method Turner was not Cotman's ideal at all. Girtin was much simpler, more luminous and transparent, freer in his handling, and broader in his masses of light and shade. Cotman accepted him at once, soon became intimate with him, went with him on country tours, and was a member of Girtin's sketching class, to which Turner, being sulky and unsociable even as a boy, was not invited. When Girtin died Cotman was only twenty years old, but the teachings of the older man had made a lasting impression. Cotman never forgot them, for Girtin was his only master. If one were writing his artistic lineage in a catalogue, it would not be far from the truth to put him down: "Pupil of Girtin, influenced by Turner."

Cotman made such rapid progress in handling the new medium that at eighteen he was an exhibitor at the Royal Academy. He continued to exhibit there for the next six years. His drawings were mainly landscapes in Surrey and Wales, whither he had been on sketching tours. In 1807, with his artistic bias firmly set, he went back to Norwich and joined Crome's local society. The following year he exhibited at the Norwich exhibition no less than sixty-seven of his works, and in 1811 he became president of the society; but, for all that, he never became a Norwich painter in the sense of painting landscape like Crome, Vincent, or Stark. The Cotman conception was something very different, something more aspiring, something more world-embracing. The man was a Londoner by education, and artistically belongs to the group with Girtin and Turner.

Cotman married early, and, with a family to support, he followed Crome's example and taught drawing. Possessed of antiquarian tastes, he became interested in architectural work, made many etchings of Norman and Gothic architecture and of sepulchral brasses in Norfolk and thereabout. These were published in several authoritative volumes. The first was a book of "Etchings of Ancient Buildings in England," and it appeared in 1811. Then followed "Specimens of Norman and Gothic Architecture in the County of Norfolk" (fifty plates), "Architectural Antiquities of Nor-

folk" (sixty plates), "Sepulchral Brasses in Norfolk," "Antiquities of St. Mary's Cathedral at Stourbridge." Between 1817 and 1820 he made some trips to Normandy with his friend Mr. Dawson Turner, and from them came the volume of "Architectural Antiquities of Normandy," Turner writing the text. To-day these volumes of etchings have value as illustration, but they are not so fine artistically as one could wish for. Cotman followed, or tried to follow, Piranesi in etching; but his work is dry, mechanical, and badly printed in the bargain.

About 1812 Cotman moved to Yarmouth, and there taught, etched, and painted for some dozen years. After that he returned to Norwich, gave up his architectural etchings, and devoted himself to painting and pupils. He was not encouraged by his prospects in Norwich, and he suffered much from depression of spirits, which, indeed, never entirely left him thereafter. In 1834 he was appointed professor of drawing in King's College, London. His fellow-student Turner possibly had something to do with the appointment, for, when asked who was the man, he exclaimed impatiently, "Why, Cotman, of course." The appointment greatly pleased Cotman. He moved to London, was elected a member of a number of societies, and there published his last book of etchings, a "Liber Studiorum," in emulation, perhaps, of Turner's effort. Teaching now took up much of his time (Dante Gabriel Rossetti was under him as a pupil for a time), but he nevertheless drew and painted a large number of pictures—some of them a trifle flamboyant. He was never quite himself after his return from Yarmouth, and he died—worn out with constant effort and disappointment—in July, 1842. After his death, his drawings were sold at Christie's for only a few shillings apiece. Wherein art history repeats itself once more.

A man's pictures doubtless speak many things to many people, but to a picture-lover Cotman's work is eloquent of cultivation, refinement, sentiment. He was a man of education, possessed of knowledge and taste, and whatever he did bears the impress not only of culture but of delicacy and thoughtfulness. In sentiment, mood, or feeling, his was a poetic cast of mind—the romantic-poetic at that. In his works there is usually a something hidden that he can only hint at—the mystery of dark shadow along the wood-road, the haunting sense of desolation in the ruined castle on the hill, the hoary antiquity of the cathedral lifting its bulk against the sky, the loneliness of tossing fisher-boats under the moonlight.

FISHING-BOATS OFF YARMOUTH, BY JOHN SELL COTMAN.

COLLECTION OF THE LATE J. J. COLMAN, ESQ., NORWICH.

He does not show the headlong, furious romanticism of Delacroix. There is no brawl or noise or shock of dramatic effect. The romance is quiet, but it pervades every tower and bridge and tree in the landscape. Something of this poetic feeling was undoubtedly the inspiration of his many drawings of old Norman and Gothic architecture, of his Turnerian compositions with mountain, castle, and waterfall, of his dark, flashing streams and lonely windmills and silent plains.

Not that he was always in such moods—not that he was forever exhibiting the romantic imagination. He had a keen eye for the realities of life in landscape, and occasionally made drawings that are comparable to those of Millet. The "Breaking the Clod," in the Reeve collection at Norwich, is an illustration. The whole scene, from the toiling horses and the open field to the trees beyond and the sky above, is profound in its observation and masterful in its naturalistic drawing. From such themes he could turn gaily away to do the "Hay Barge," which is only an atmospheric idyl, or the "Breakdown," where light is focused on a stone wall as in a Decamps, or the interior of "Trentham Church," where the eye is caught and held by the beauty of color in the pulpit-hangings. A man of sentiment and imagination, he was also an artist with a shrewd sense of the decorative, and could admire things as readily for what they looked as for what they meant.

Most of Cotman's pictures were small and simple in motive (his son said he never painted a large picture), and the bulk of them was in water-color. The medium he learned so early was perhaps his best means of expression. He handled it broadly and suggestively, never in any petty way; omitting from the scene what he chose, but adding nothing to it. In a Millet sense again he was an excellent draftsman. He never bothered himself with the classic line of Claude or Poussin, and cared little about recording the incidental. It was his object to put down the large, salient facts, and let the details go unnoticed. All his lines are intended to summarize and suggest rather than to realize literally; and in this he was very successful. He could indicate the height, mass, and weight of a cathedral, the heave of a hill-ridge, or the body and depth of a woodland with a few strokes and yet with the most forceful results. It made little difference whether he worked with the brush, a reed pen, or a pencil. The "Wold Afloat," with its great wind (a black-and-white in the Reeve collection), is just as

excellent in tree- and grass-drawing as the "Fishing-boats off Yarmouth" (the oil-painting which Mr. Cole has engraved) is excellent in wave-drawing.

Cotman's light was something that changed with his subject. In his early pictures he fancied a white light, not unlike that of Corot, and used it frequently in wood interiors. In cathedral pictures and in pictures with great perspective he employed a wide sky with thin cirrus clouds and sunlight, after the Turnerian pattern. With his trip to Normandy his light seems to have grown warmer, more golden, and much like the light used by Bonington. In color he was at first inclined to be somber, using many grays and quiet tones; but later he grew more florid, and in such drawings as the "Flixton Hall" — one of his late water-colors — he seemed, to use his own word, to be indulging in much "frippery" of costume and losing himself in the bizarre. Here again he is a reminder of Bonington. Oil-painting he did not take up seriously until after 1808. It was doubtless owing to his study of oils that his color came out of its somber stage. Many of his canvases he underbased in yellow or pink, which gave depth and richness of tone to such pictures as the "Breakdown" and the "Château in Normandy." After his Normandy trips he grew still warmer in color and tried many high flights, but they were not always successful.

The volume of his work was large. All subjects interested him. At one time he painted portraits, called himself a portrait-painter, and seemed to regard landscape as something by the way. His versatility was quite on a par with his industry, and as for his styles, he had too many to trace them with any sureness. His development paralleled rather than followed Turner; but of course he never possessed Turner's great genius. There are, however, many painters who, without "splitting the ethereal blue" of sublimity, have produced beautiful art, and Cotman was certainly one of them.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

THAT Cotman reveals a sympathy for large forms and simple masses may be readily seen from his painting of the "Fishing-boats off Yarmouth." The treatment of the sky, in particular, conveys a fine feeling of space and of aërial perspective, and of movement also; for these vast floating shapes, drifting rapidly in the wind, one feels must soon give place to others. It is one of those breezy days when the cloudy canopy of the heaven is subject to great and swift changes. The

execution here follows the conception, and is loose and free, attaining considerable brushiness in the large, luminous space, as I have endeavored to suggest in the engraving. This large, bright expanse of sky with its opposing dark cloud is a fine touch of nature, and gives great dignity, almost majesty, to the composition. That the concentration of light should be here, and that it should be of this brilliancy — neither more nor less — was all-important to the vitality of the picture, for, in relation to it, the water receives an excellent and just value, so necessary to its character of weight and solidity, apart from its superimposed texture of rippling fluidity, which makes so simple and powerful a contrast to the quiet, airy quality of the sky. There is a tender, limpid character to the atmosphere toward the horizon around by the distant ships. The rowboat, with its sailors mounting the wave in the face of the gale and flying spray, is a fine bit of original seeing.

The size of this painting is twenty-four and three fourths inches high by twenty-nine and a half inches wide. Its general tone is a warm gray, inclining to golden in the broad masses of light. This picture and the "Mishap" (or "Breakdown," as it is here styled) are in the Norwich Castle Museum, of which Mr. James Reeve, the author of a "Memoir of Cotman," and the best authority on matters pertaining to the Norwich school of painters, is the curator. It is his opinion that the "Mishap," with its companion piece the "Baggage Wagon," were painted about the year 1830, and the "Fishing-boats off Yarmouth" some ten years earlier.

As in the "Fishing-boats off Yarmouth" the intention is not so much the showing of an event as the depicting of a state or variety of weather,— an endeavor to seize an impression,— so in the "Mishap" the incident is nothing, the real object of moment being the sensation that is sought to be conveyed of a warm and humid day in summer. The atmosphere is still; the trees melt dreamily into the hazy sky, standing motionless, and glistening in the sun. The foreground bush is one of yellow leaves, and glitters with fine effect, giving by contrast great depth and richness to the cool and somber glade, at the farthest extremity of whose vista the light breaks softly through the trunks of the trees. Against this shadowed space the white horse with its tumble-down load, in the full sunlight, is relieved with the greatest possible effect. The shadow of the bush upon the sunlit wall shows a weak sun, which is in accordance with the veiled softness of the fleecy sky, against whose broad expanse of light the whole of this sunny corner presents a faithful value. The whole is delicately painted, and of a fine, warm unity of tone. It is a small picture, its size being sixteen and a fourth inches high by thirteen and a fourth inches wide. These two pictures were in possession of Mr. Colman when I was kindly granted access to them for purposes of engraving. T. C.

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE

PORTRAIT OF MRS. SIDDONS, BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

CHAPTER XIII

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE

(1769–1830)

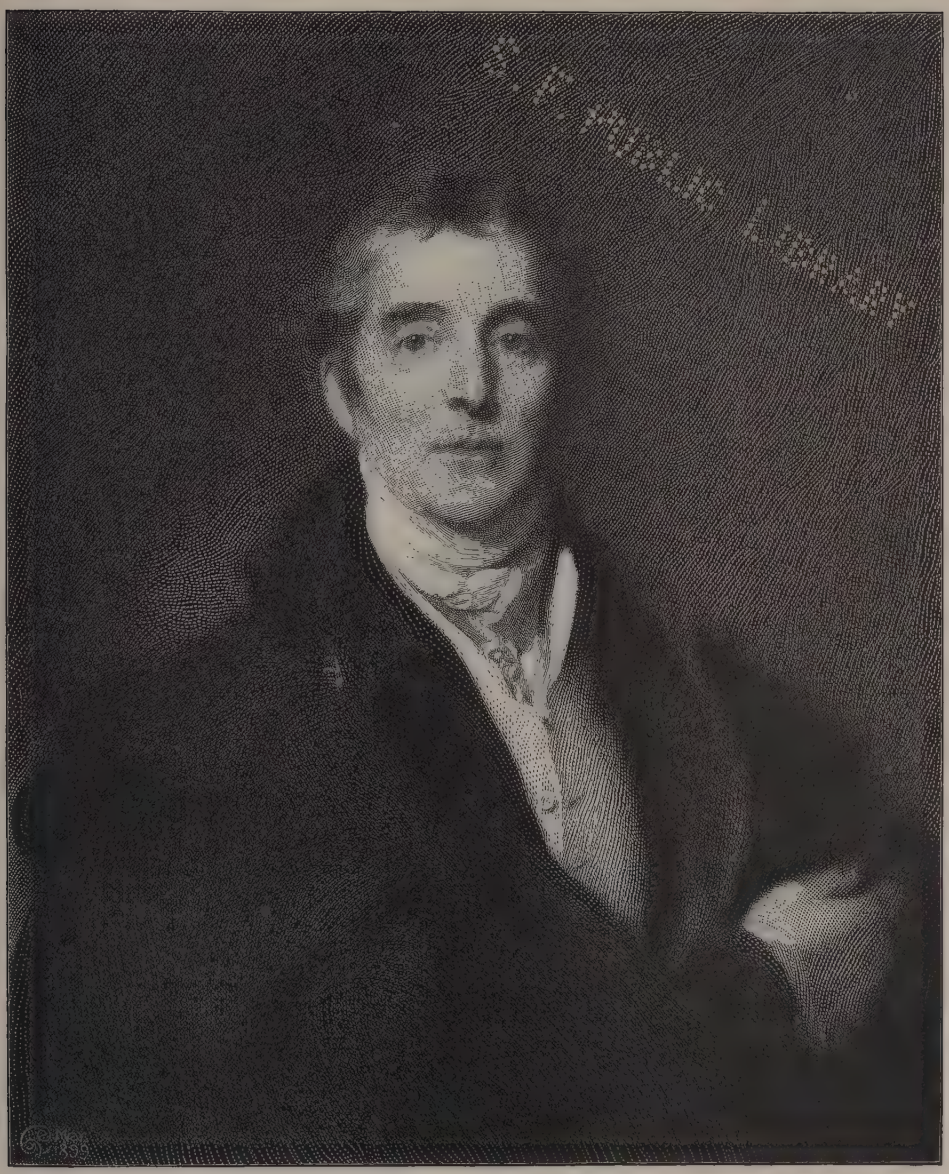
THE infant prodigy, so frequently met with in the annals of English art, crops out once more in Lawrence — the last of the older portrait-painters. As a child he was dandled on the public knee because of his precocity in reciting poetry; at five he was "taking likenesses" for a moneyed consideration; and at twelve he is said to have been the main support of his family. Raphael, with genius at his back, did not come to maturity so quickly, nor did Rubens, triumphant at Antwerp, hold popular applause so long; for Lawrence kept his admiring public to the last, and was something of a marvel both as man and boy. His whole career was brilliant, yet not through intrinsic force; his art was very successful without being great; he was honored and praised down to his grave, and yet he possessed not genius. There are men who achieve popular success without genius. Lawrence was one of them.

The father was the son of a Presbyterian minister, and was decently educated and bred to the law; but he never followed his profession. He had what is called the "poetic temperament," which probably accounts for his runaway match with a vicar's daughter and his failure to get on well in the world. He was at different times a barrister without a brief, an actor without a part, a keeper of the White Lion Inn at Devizes without guests enough to make it pay. When young Lawrence was three years old his father made a change of base, and moved into the Black Bear Inn. It was here that the boy was placed upon the table to recite Shakspere for the guests. Here also he developed a wonderful gift of making portraits in pastel of the passing public. A guest could

have a portrait painted while he waited, and the speed of the artist was not less remarkable than his age. The Duchess of Devonshire and Lord and Lady Kenyon were among his early sitters, and the record is preserved that Lady Kenyon's likeness was drawn in profile because, as the child-artist declared, "her face was not straight." In a short time he had attracted the attention of Garrick, Foote, Wilkes, Burke, Sheridan, and Johnson, and his father began traveling with him about the neighboring country, and exhibiting him as one of the wonders of the age.

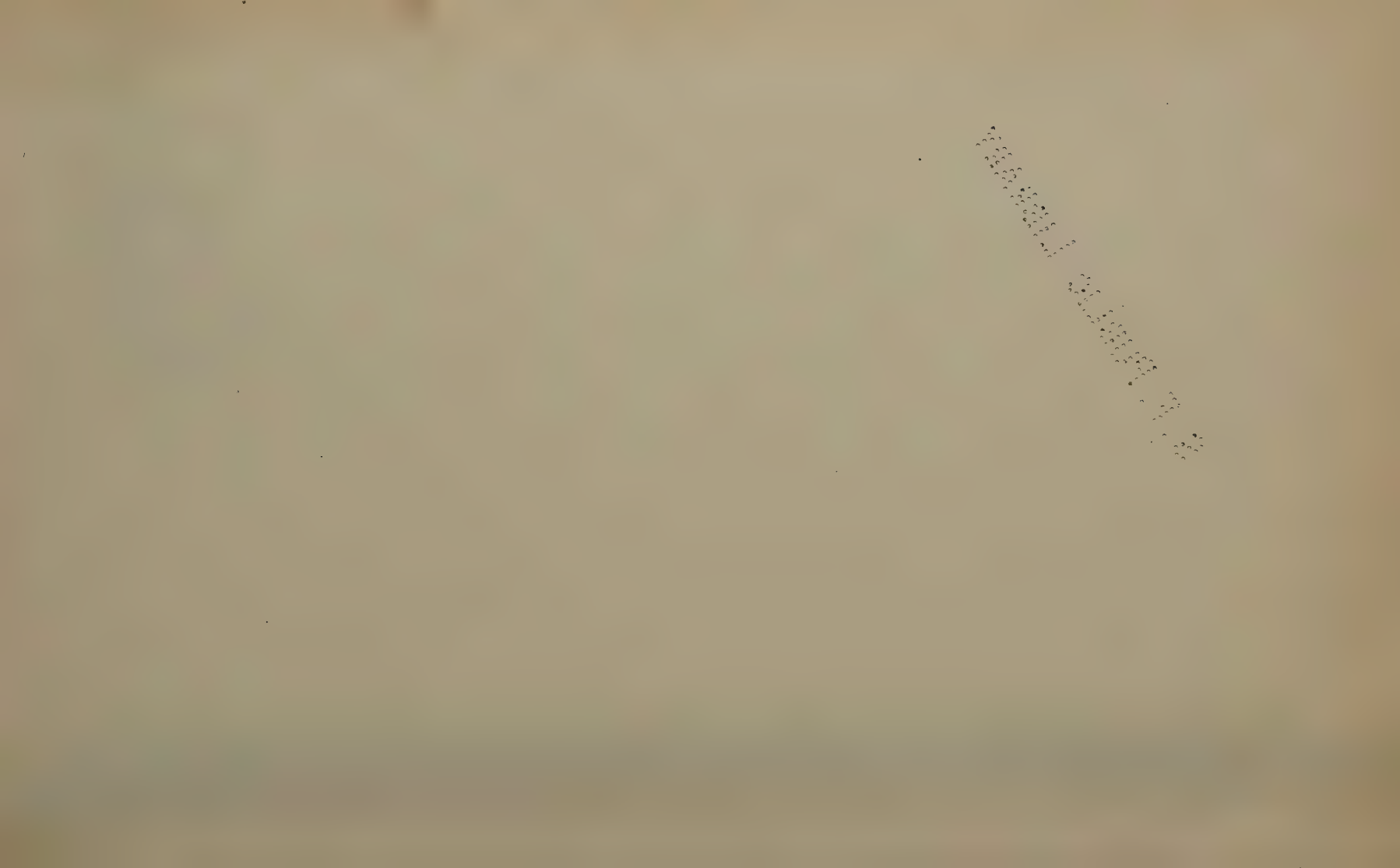
The Black Bear proved no more of a success than the White Lion, and soon the Lawrences moved to Bath. Young Thomas had been at Oxford, Weymouth, and other places, making portraits at a guinea a head, and when he finally came to Bath he was shortly the town talk, and portraits were worth a guinea and a half a head. The great Siddons sat to him, and grew fond of him; he had such charming manners that Sir H. Harpur sought to adopt him, and his youthful appearance was so handsome that William Hoare wanted to paint him as the young Christ. No wonder that at twelve years of age his studio was the haunt of fashion, and that he himself was something of a Bath rage. In the meantime, while his boyish talent for drawing had been fostered, his general education had been neglected. Some local schooling came to him, but it was slight. The elementary studies, with a little Latin and a great deal less Greek, were about all he ever achieved. It is said that the boy wanted to be an actor, but he was already too much of a success as a painter to be allowed the change. Evidently his family had no notion of his abandoning the lucrative brush for either an academic education or the stage.

In 1787 Lawrence went up to London, took apartments in Leicester Square, and entered the schools of the Royal Academy. That year, though only eighteen, he sent seven pictures to the Academy exhibition, five of them being portraits. He had met Reynolds and others through his early admirer, Hoare the painter, and his affable manners had almost at the start placed him in good social circles. Just how it was brought about is something of a mystery, but soon nobility was patronizing him, and finally the Duke of York, the queen, and the Princess Amelia sat to him. At twenty-one he made a "hit" with the whole-length portrait of Miss Farren, afterward Countess of Derby, one of the best of his many portraits. Then he bothered himself over a large historical canvas,



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE.

COLLECTION OF LORD ROSEBERY, LONDON.



called "Homer Reciting the Iliad"; and a little later he returned to the Academy exhibition with a portrait of George III. In the same exhibition appeared a portrait of the Prince of Wales by Hoppner, and that was the beginning of a struggle between the painters that ended only with Hoppner's death.

At times during the years of rivalry that followed there were acrimonious remarks passed along the line from Hoppner to Lawrence; but the latter made no reply. The king was behind him, and he could afford to keep silent; and, besides, he was naturally a polite man. At twenty-two his Majesty made him a supplemental associate of the Royal Academy, in spite of the rule that no one under twenty-four could be elected to that position; and when Reynolds died Lawrence was made portrait-painter to the king. Everything now seemed to favor his advancement. He was elected a member of the Dilettanti Society, made a Royal Academician, and duly installed as the fashionable portrait-painter of the day. He moved to Piccadilly, set up an establishment, and again tried to do historical canvases, but without marked success. His portraits, however, were not abandoned. He was a success in that department; and though some clients left his studio after the scandalous talk about him and the unfortunate Princess of Wales, he had sitters enough, and to spare. He went on painting Curran, Eldon, Thurlow, Pitt, and others, and in 1810, when Hoppner died, he had the entire field to himself.

Lawrence had never been out of England, never knew Italy, the mother of the arts, and it was not until 1814 that he went to Paris to see the art treasures that Napoleon had collected there. He was soon recalled by the prince regent to paint some of the allied sovereigns and their generals, then in London. Shortly afterward he was knighted, and in 1818 was sent to Aix-la-Chapelle, where the European rulers were assembled in congress, to paint the portraits of the chief actors. These portraits were for the Waterloo Room in Windsor Castle, and the emperors of Russia and Austria, the King of Prussia, and the princes, with Metternich, Blücher, Wellington, Platoff, and many others, sat to him. He now went to Vienna to paint more portraits, and to Rome to paint the Pope and Cardinal Gonsalvi. Everywhere he was the recipient of honors and attentions, and at Rome he was received as a second Raphael—almost an inspired being.

These attentions had no small effect upon his prospects at

home, and when he returned to London he found that he had been made president of the Royal Academy. The king was dead, but George IV continued him as his portrait-painter, Oxford made him a D.C.L., and the art academies of Rome, Florence, Bologna, Venice, Vienna, and even of Denmark and America, began electing him to honorary memberships. There never was a painter, not even Titian, who received so many honors as Lawrence. He was at his height, but still the golden apples fell in his lap. In 1825 he was sent to Paris to paint Charles X and the Dauphin, and he returned with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor. Every year some new distinction was pinned on his coat-lapel, and he certainly was prosperous in all ways save one. He could make money, but he could not keep it. His prices had risen from a guinea to seven hundred guineas for a portrait, and at that figure he had as much as he could do; yet somehow he was always poverty-stricken. He said himself that he was careless of money, and his contemporaries record that he gave it away to almost any one who asked it; but whatever the reason, the result was apparent enough. All his life he was worried by financial matters, and the worry ceased only with his death in 1830. There was a great funeral over him as he was laid in St. Paul's Cathedral; but he left nothing behind him except his name, his pictures, and a collection of drawings after the old masters.

There is every reason to believe that much of Lawrence's success was due not alone to his clever brush, but to his polished manners and his courtier spirit. He early became a man of the world, with a proper regard for people of quality. He knew how to defer to nobility, how to speak to kings, how to stroke humanity with the grain. As late as 1823, when he was P.R.A. and a famed painter, he was writing to Sir William Knighton about a portrait ordered by the king: "I beg you to throw me with every sentiment of duty and reverence at his Majesty's feet for this additional distinction which the king confers upon my pencil, and of the grateful happiness for the subject and distinction of the task which his feeling beneficence has assigned me." The gratitude is a bit excessive, it may be thought, but Lawrence knew just how much his sublimated Majesty would stand. It was a famous age for thrift following fawning, a shallow age, with George IV setting the pace; but Reynolds and Gainsborough had lived through one quite as bad, and still maintained an independence. Sir Thomas

might have done likewise had he not been somewhat shallow in himself. His companions thought him a vain man, and the king was good enough to say that he was a "perfect gentleman," by which latter token we may be sure that he was not a disturbing element in either politics or art. His personal character lacked in sturdiness, in assertiveness, in virile force. It never occurred to him to fight or reform anything, and there was so much in the life about him that needed reformation. He sat still and accepted the day in which he lived, probably thinking it better than the days of Pericles. Almost everything about him was pinchbeck, but he did not seem to realize it, for he himself was only a brilliant kind of plated ware. Not but what he had skill and ability of a rather high order. He could paint a picture or pay court to a lady very cleverly indeed. His love-affairs were almost as well known in London as his pictures. But it seems that in his heart he had neither the deep love of art nor the true love of woman. Both were semi-fashionable pursuits, to be regulated after a certain manner, as one makes a bow or carries a walking-stick. Art, love, faith, life, were mere matters of form, and what one needed was not sincerity, truth, or purpose, but the correct formula of style.

A mind that bothers itself largely with conventionalities rarely discloses great originality, and a painter without conviction never plows deep in art. Lawrence seldom got beneath the surface. Portraiture was to him largely a matter of some nobleman wishing a "smart" likeness of himself in pomatumed hair, Osbaldistone tie, colored waistcoat, and Hessian boots; or it meant her ladyship in white, with blue ribbons, short waist, and puffed sleeves, posed as an innocent young thing just out of school. Both of them had clean faces, new clothes, and engaging smiles, which led Campbell the poet to say that Lawrence's sitters "seem to have got in a drawing-room in the mansions of the blessed, and to be looking at themselves in the mirrors." Everybody had to have an air of tailoring and good breeding about them, as though born to circumstances and position. Sir Thomas was too polite to paint people otherwise than at their best, and what he thought "best" we to-day might translate "prettiest."

For, besides the exactness of costume and pose, he could somehow rub a quality of sentiment into his sitters' faces that showed the inside of their heads was quite as "pretty" as the outside. This appears noticeably in the portraits of children, with the celebrated

"Master Lambton" in the lead. They are so artificial, so priggishly unnatural, that one turns away in disappointment. Gainsborough's children are much more honest, and the children of Reynolds more naïve. The best picture of this type that Lawrence ever painted was that of the two Calmady children, engraved under the name of "Nature." In that picture Lawrence not only drew a graceful group, but he really got the children (and himself) "off guard," as it were. The double portrait which Mr. Cole has engraved is another fairly successful effort at the joyousness of young girls. There is little fault to be found in it, and yet, like many others of his fair sitters, these are artful, coquettish, soubrettish.

His ladies of quality have necks as long as Parmigiano's Madonnas, and eyes as languishing as Perugino's saints. One of the best of them, the "Countess Gower and Daughter," is just a little of this type for all its clever painting. The turn of the head is sentimental, and the mock-childishness of the child with one shoe off and one still on is just the straw's weight in the balance that makes for affectation. The "Countess of Derby" (Miss Farren) is an early picture, and has escaped affectation. It has been criticized for the anachronism of the "John" coat and the furs in a summer landscape, but the criticism is hardly worth quoting. Reynolds and Gainsborough painted people in evening costume wandering through classical woodlands, but no one ever found fault with them on that account. Such matters are of no consequence in art. Lawrence was painting a picture, and this time he painted an excellent one. Indeed, one may recall many examples of Lawrence's portraiture, such as the "Lady Dover," or the sad-faced "Mrs. Siddons," that seem excellent in every respect; and yet, in spite of these, the general statement holds true that he painted the artificial and the pretentious much oftener than the frank and the natural.

It is just so with his portraits of men; they are not positive or sturdy; and yet to confute such a statement one has only to think of the worn, tired, lion-like repose of the "Warren Hastings" in the National Portrait Gallery, the forceful "Sir Joseph Banks" in the British Museum, or the alert, clear-cut "Wellington" belonging to Lord Rosebery. With these pictures in mind, one grows enthusiastic, and is disposed to think Lawrence a really great painter; but a trip to Windsor Castle is fatal to such an idea.

Time after time in the Windsor rooms he prettifies a strong head, and produces only a dinner-plate portrait. And royalty there fares no better than others. The Georges are pompous spectacles in white, the Princess Sophia shrieks in red, and Metternich is a pattern in gold lace.

The contradictions of Lawrence are bewildering. If judged by his best work, he must be ranked high; if by his general average, then he must be placed below Reynolds, Gainsborough, and perhaps Romney. No one of his times swung to quite such extremes of excellence and mediocrity, success and failure. He had more skill, perhaps, than mental grasp, and could execute better than he could plan. His inconsistencies and curious judgments about art and artists are as indicative of the man as his work. He gave out, for instance, admiration for the Elgin Marbles and Canova in the same breath, as though the maker of the one was on a par with the other. He ranked Michelangelo among the gods, and yet was quite willing to place Fuseli on his right hand. Doubtless the Elgin Marbles and Michelangelo suggested a mentality far beyond him, but in Canova and Fuseli he recognized a clever technical skill that he thoroughly understood and might himself equal if not surpass. Most of Lawrence's ability was of the Canova-Fuseli kind. He had no comprehensive, far-reaching mind, but his hand was very cunning and frequently produced portraiture of no mean order.

Where and how he got his skill — and he had plenty of it — no one knows. He seems to have picked it up by the wayside and given it a final rub at the Royal Academy. He never went to the Continent until too late to profit by foreign pictures, and it is remarkable, in the circumstances, that he drew and painted so well. His early attempts at the historical canvas were, of course, not successful. His "Satan Calling his Legions" was likened by Anthony Pasquin to "a mad sugar-baker dancing naked in a conflagration of his own treacle"; and even his friend Fuseli said that "it was a d—d thing certainly, though not the devil." The criticism is brutally frank, but not quite true. The picture is not lofty enough in conception, but it is well drawn and painted. He did better with his half-historical pieces, like "Kemble as Hamlet"; but portraiture was his proper field. In his day he stood quite alone in it, producing the "column and curtain" picture to the last with much elegance, if not always with good taste. He

could compose a portrait group very well, and execute it with a great deal of dash, as many of his works bear witness to this day. Indeed, Lawrence technically was rather a fascinating workman. He was a very good draftsman. His brothers of the craft praised his drawing of eyes and hands, and the portrait of the Cardinal Gonsalvi, or that of the Duke of Wellington, shows that he knew how to model a face with firmness. His early habit of drawing in crayons was doubtless of service to him, and after he took up oils he still continued to draw the model in crayon, adding the color last of all. Perhaps this method of securing drawing allowed him the greater freedom in his brush-work. Certainly he was the most facile of all the English portrait-painters, running on at times into a superficial and ineffectual glibness and producing textures porcelain-like in their smoothness.

In color Sir Thomas was not remarkable, though usually pleasing in warm hues tempered by whites, blues, and grays. His color was not always true in value, because of his arbitrary way of driving light toward the center of the canvas. He usually focused the light upon the face, darkened the foreground and background, and thus secured an effective high light by contrast. The fact that he sacrificed color in shadow, and that his tone was not true, may be something shocking to the realists and literalists, but Lawrence's portraiture gained rather than lost by it. It was no new device in painting. Rembrandt before him had proved its effectiveness, and Sir Joshua had practised it.

Lawrence started portrait-painting in the manner of Reynolds, whom he greatly admired, and many of his best works were done before he was twenty-five. After he became popular he was hurried. During his life he sent over three hundred and eleven pictures to exhibitions of the Royal Academy, and this represented but a small part of his labors. Naturally, under such stress he grew somewhat careless. His method became a formulated facility and his style stiffened into a manner. Toward the last his cream-whites changed to cold whites, his modeling outgrew its solidity, his textures became velvety and his handling slippery.

He came at a pretentious period, and had a pretentious monarch to dictate taste; and perhaps the wonder is, or should be, that he did so well. The best period of English portraiture had passed with Reynolds, and Lawrence was the "singer of an empty day," somewhat like Tiepolo after Paolo Veronese. But Tiepolo

has, not without reason, many admirers, and Lawrence, too, can claim a following even to the present time. His immediate pupils, like Etty and Harlowe, rather exaggerated his shortcomings, but in more recent times many portrait-painters have taken large hints from Lawrence and paid him the compliment of imitation. Even the Frenchmen, with Carolus Duran in the lead, have not studied his work in vain, and a number of prominent American painters of the present day might be mentioned as gathering inspiration, at least, from the same quarter. Sir Thomas was not without his virtues, but he was so cumbered with inequalities and inconsistencies that any attempt at an appreciation ends in something like contradiction. It may, however, be said, in a general way, that his conceptions were not lofty or very original, that his sentiment was sentimentality, his method somewhat flashy, his execution animated, vivacious, and quite worthy of applause. And to every one of these statements an exception may be taken.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

THE portrait of "Lady Derby" (Miss Farren, the actress) is at Houghton Hall, the residence of Lord de Grey Wilton, near Massingham. It is a large canvas, the figure being life-sized. We were allowed to remove it from its place over the mantelpiece of the dining-room to a more favorable light for photographing. After obtaining an excellent photograph, and retouching it carefully from the original, the picture was engraved from this retouched photograph.

As an example of coloring and technique, this portrait ranks among the finest by the artist. Its tone is so pure, deep, and fresh! It owes this peculiar quality in great measure to its spontaneity of handling — its dexterity. The tone of its deep blue sky, which plays so important a feature in the composition, is magnificent — not alone in its warm, soft, and lustrous quality, reminding one of the Venetians, but in its atmospheric feeling, its aërial depth and subtlety of modeling, and its gentle gradation to the horizon as it becomes flushed with orange and rosy hues. This is in perfect harmony with the quietude of the landscape. The trees are painted with fullness and breadth; they are grayish green in color, warm, liquid, and they soften mysteriously into the sky and the dusky shades that are stealing over the earth. Against the masterful and subdued treatment of the background, its quietness and aërial suppleness, the figure stands out with pleasing and vivacious effect. This effect is due as much to the contrast of its technique as of its color; yet while this gives vigor of relief, its unity with the background — its mystery of enveloping air and light — is not disturbed. Notice the variety of its contour, its innumerable subtle blendings and delicate accents, in the outline of the hair particularly. The gray silk cloak bordered with brown fur, the dress, gray also, the brown muff and boa of similar color, and the brown kid gloves,

are all astonishing for the ease and skill of their execution. But, above all, nothing could engage the attention more than the way the look of life is caught in the face — the glance, answering so well to the gesture of the whole person. One can, before the original, enjoy these things for a long time.

This master work was painted when the artist was but twenty-one years of age, and was the foundation of his fame. Cunningham, in his "Lives of British Painters," thus alludes to it: "This was a portrait of Miss Farren, afterward Countess of Derby. She was very beautiful, and the painter caught all the fascination of her looks, and put into her eyes a luster new to English art. In other respects there was a strange deficiency of taste and propriety: the actress was painted in a winter cloak and muff, with naked arms." And he further adds: "The public praised, but criticism was not sparing. Lawrence was astonished and confounded with the complaint of want of propriety in the costume." It is evident from this that Cunningham had not seen the original, but depended upon what the critics said for his knowledge of the costume. Poor Lawrence may indeed well have been "astonished and confounded" at the unjustness of the criticism which spoke of "naked arms"!

The portrait of the two sisters represents Sarah and Charlotte Hardy, differing only by a year in their respective ages. Sarah was born in 1780, and was married at twenty-one years of age to the Rev. Daniel Lysons, rector of Rodmarton, author of "The Environs of London, N." She died in 1808. Charlotte was born in 1781, and married Ralph Price of Sydenham (second son of Sir Charles Price, first baronet). She lived till 1850. They were daughters of Colonel Thomas Carteret Hardy. I am indebted for this information to a collateral descendant of the lovely pair — Mr. W. J. Hardy of London.

It has been said in reference to the portraits of Lawrence that "in manliness he had rivals, in loveliness he had none"; and certainly if we turn from his faces of the sterner sex to those of his fair maids, we might think with the poet Burns:

> His prentice han' he tried on man,
> And then he made the lasses!

There is an elegance, refinement, and airy gracefulness that is engaging in the harmony of this captivating couple. In the first place, nothing could be happier than the charm of the composition that unites the two in one circle of light. The arm of the girl in black velvet, who leans affectionately with clasped hands upon the shoulder of her sister, is of vital importance in linking the two and forming a whole of the mass of the light at the same time as serving to accentuate the sentiment of the bond of loving union. How delightfully the warm and intimate nature of the one is offset by the sweet pensiveness of the other! A powerful contrast is also secured by arranging one in white and the other in black. Everything, in short, about this portrait-piece is studied for effect and expression, and simplicity is not the least means to the attainment of this end.

The tone of the whole is golden. There is no pronounced coloring in any part, but the eye takes in on the first impression a warm, radiant, and delicate ensemble. It is pitched in a delicate, tender key, and with an eye to its impressionability as a whole; but if we examine its parts, we shall find, to begin with, that the background curtain is of a soft, neutral tone of maroon, blending imperceptibly into the gray of the pedestal behind the girl in white, and softening on the other side into the warm gray of the evening sky with its fine, characteristic touches of golden streaks of light toward the horizon; and this part loses itself mysteriously in

LADY DERBY (MISS FARREN), BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE.

COLLECTION OF LORD DE GREY WILTON.

the tones of the foliage that form so delightful a background to the girl in black velvet. How subtly this black velvet seems to grow out of the background! And then it is far from anything approaching black, but is warm and luminous, and appears deep and lustrous only in relation to the ensemble. The garment carelessly thrown over the knee is likewise of a rich, delicate, and unobtrusive tone, of an ocher shade very much grayed. The white garment of the other girl is mellow and yellowish in tone. It was a formula with Lawrence that the ascendancy of white objects can never be departed from with impunity in portraiture, and thus we always find in his canvases a pretty considerable portion of this negative element — far from negative, however, for he held as equally important the truth of the union of color with light, and demonstrated in practice — if not in theory — the dictum of Sir Joshua that "the masses of light in a picture should always be of a warm, mellow color."

Of all Lawrence's female portraits, that of the actress "Mrs. Siddons" is the most popular as well as the most charming. Cunningham observes that "it was perhaps well for the fame of the artist that the nature of his studies called him frequently to use his skill on faces which had intellectual as well as external loveliness to recommend them." And he informs us that "Sir Thomas bestowed great pains on his female portraits, and took advantage of every circumstance that could contribute to their attraction." We can understand, therefore, why he made use of a kind of wimple about the head and chin of the fair lady. That part of it beneath the chin serves admirably, by the reflection it catches, to illumine what otherwise would be a dark shadow similar to that beneath the nose; but the vague softness and delicacy which it now possesses gives a pleasing variety to the features and contributes greater value to the upper part, especially to the eyes — which were evidently designed to be speaking.

About Lawrence's painting of eyes: Fuseli, it is said, swore passionately that they rivaled those of Titian, but I do not think they should be thus compared. Lawrence here has given great brilliancy to the eyes, and even descends to the minute circumstance of showing the moisture glistening upon the white of the eye and glinting upon the lower lid, which is purely a piece of "chic," and unlike anything that I can remember in the portraits of the great Venetian.

"Ah!" exclaims one of a party of Americans, halting before the portrait of the famous actress where it hangs in the National Gallery, "a beautiful woman is a picture which drives all beholders nobly mad!" His friend replies: "What 's the character she 's in, that her head 's bound up so? or has she got the mumps?"

The painting is life-sized, on canvas, and measures two feet six inches high by two feet one inch wide. It belongs, in style, to the artist's earlier manner. Cunningham observes that in his earlier paintings he used white of a warm, creamy color, and in this instance the white is most decidedly of this nature. It will be noticed that its value in black and white is no different to the tone of the flesh. In his later works, however, the white became more pronounced. Of the great colorists the artist preferred those who pronounced their white in a positive manner, making it tell distinct from other tints as a perfect white; and he acted upon this in his very latest productions, which consequently have more the force of nature and are as modern as the best of the present-day work.

It is said that Sir Joshua, who was at the fag-end of his career when Lawrence was just budding forth, remarked, when he saw the youth's portraits: "This

young man has begun at a point of excellence where I left off."

Chief among Lawrence's portraits of men is the bust of the Duke of Wellington, owned by Lord Rosebery. This canvas was painted in 1821, when the artist was fifty-two years old and at the height of his popularity. It is life-sized, and shows the duke at fifty-two years also.

Lord Rosebery says it was given by the duke to General Arbuthnot. On the back Wellington has twice written his name, with the date "Dec. 13th 1821"; and on its lower part is the following inscription (doubtless in General Arbuthnot's handwriting): "An admirable likeness. Charles Arbuthnot." It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1822, and afterward at the British Institution in 1845, by General Arbuthnot. The picture was sold at the sale of the general's effects, on June 29, 1878, for eight hundred and fifteen guineas, to a Mr. Davis, from whom Lord Rosebery probably bought it.

In the dignity and animation of this refined head the gentleman is visible first of all. Here is a countenance of powerful intellect and fine symmetry, of that beauty which belongs to thought and calm reflection, which discloses at the same time a distinction of bearing and nobility of mien, with the simplicity and graciousness of manner that one might expect to meet with in a Marcus Aurelius — a greatness of soul, in short. The artist has rendered the unseen by the seen.

This portrait belongs to the painter's later style, and evinces his more pronounced treatment of white; it is livelier, and tells with more of the force of nature against the tone of the flesh. The whole is a rich piece of coloring. The tone of the black cloak in its broad lighting is rendered with delicacy and breadth, and the contours float subtly into the warm tones of the background here and there with the truth of nature. The construction of the head, its fine modeling and exquisite delicacy and force of relief, are qualities that place it among the artist's finest efforts.

T. C.

JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER

ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS, BY J. M. W. TURNER.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

CHAPTER XIV

JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER

(1775–1851)

IT has been remarked more than once that the most passionate poets of the country are usually born and bred in the city. The farmer's boy, whistling his way afield behind his cows, looks upon river, forest, and mountain as commonplace, every-day facts; but the London prentice, who sees them only on a bank-holiday, overlooks the facts, and feels the immensity and the mystery of nature. The distant and the unknown are always hedged about by romance, and often the warmed-up imagination turns fact into fancy, and makes of common clay the airy castles of dreamland. Certainly Turner, the son of a London barber, looked upon nature in some such way as this. As a boy he knew the grimy streets of London, and saw landscapes only in shop-windows. Later on, at school, he caught glimpses of the Thames at Brentford, and of the sea-shore at Margate. He was dreaming fond fancies then, and when he grew up and was able to travel and study, he still saw nature as in a vision. In his art it was only a peg upon which he hung his own conceptions of form and color. From beginning to end he built Kublai-Khan palaces and grew Hesperidian gardens along the heights of Alban mount and Carthaginian promontory. He was a great romanticist in his mood of mind, and he ended by romancing the face of nature out of all countenance. He was a great poet of decorative beauty, and again he ended by rubbing sunlight and shadow into mere schemes of flaming color.

Turner was born in Maiden Lane, London, April 23, 1775. The father naturally wished the son to succeed him in the barber-shop, but he yielded gracefully when the son developed art tastes. "Dad never praised me for anything but saving a halfpenny," was

Turner's remark. Yet the father was always a proud father, and the son had no need for encouragement in saving money. At Brentford, his first school, he colored engravings at fourpence apiece, and later he hung his father's shop with small drawings for sale at a shilling apiece. He was always looking out for pecuniary compensation. Indeed, a greed of gold and a love of fame were his consuming passions. His schooling was somewhat erratic, and his elementary education was in correspondence therewith. At eleven years of age he was at the Soho Academy, where a Mr. Palice was officiating as drawing master, and later he attended a school at Margate. After he was thirteen all his study revolved about art. He left Margate, and was placed with Thomas Malton to learn perspective. Turner always called Malton his real master, but the master sent the pupil home as unteachable. After that he colored prints for Raphael Smith, washed in the backgrounds of architectural drawings, and was advised by Thomas Hardwick, another one of his masters, to take up the painting of landscape.

In 1789 Turner entered the schools of the Royal Academy, and was allowed in Sir Joshua's painting-room, where he copied portraits. The next year he made his first appearance as an exhibitor at the Academy with a picture called "The Archbishop's Palace at Lambeth." His first sketching tour was probably in 1792, for the next year he exhibited two views of Bristol. He had already set up a studio of his own in Maiden Lane, was drawing for magazines, and at odd times traveling on foot through England and Wales. Girtin was possibly his companion. They were boys together, and had studied nights at Dr. Munro's, making drawings with Cotman for "half a crown apiece and a supper." They studied there examples of Gainsborough, Wilson, Claude, Salvator; and they copied drawings by Sandby and Cozens. The influences upon Turner at this time were the historical landscape and the work of his associates. He, later in life, outgrew the landscape formula; but he never got rid of the influence of Cozens and Girtin. He himself said that he learned more from Cozens than from any one else; but Turner from his nature was not one to be taught anything except that which related to method. The water-color bias and the technical method received from Cozens and Girtin were with him to the end of his days. He was always a good water-colorist; he never was a satisfactory painter in oils.

At twenty-four Turner was made an associate of the Royal

Academy, and had considerable celebrity. He had not only been industrious, but, working with great rapidity, he had developed a wide range of subjects. There were landscapes with towns, abbeys, cathedrals, bridges, and country-seats each purporting to have a local habitation and a name; and there were sea-pieces, battles, fires, and plagues, illustrative of history, fiction, and the Bible. By the year 1800 he had established what has been called his first style. He had already a pronounced liking for the grand view of mountain, plain, and valley, with a glimpse of a river and a castle on a height. He had painted castles in England and Wales, and he had also gone somewhat out of his way apparently to paint the "Battle of the Nile," "Jason," and various other wholly imaginary subjects. His preference, however, was the poetic landscape. This in method was careful, detailed, rather subdued in color, and fairly accurate as to facts, though at this early time he had abundantly proved his ability to pull the actual scene to pieces and reconstruct it after his own fashion upon canvas. Mr. Hamerton, in his biography of Turner, makes this very clear in his convincing analysis of Turner's "Kilchurn" (1802). The medium used at this time was largely water-color, but he was also painting pictures in oil.

In 1802 he was made a Royal Academician, and started on his first tour abroad. How many times he went to the Continent no one knows. He moved about silently and alone, leaving no trace of his movements save in his drawings. He was trying to outdo Claude, Van de Velde, Wilson, Poussin — in fact, every one who had ever attempted landscape. He had begun with mountain subjects taken from the Savoy Alps, and in England he was painting "Lowther Castle" and "Petworth" to please noblemen, and the "Sun Rising through Mist" as a study in light and air. The name and great reputation of Claude seemed to bother him, and in 1807 he deliberately instituted a comparison by bringing out his "Liber Studiorum" and matching it against Claude's "Liber Veritatis." It was an unfair contest. Claude's drawings were mere studio memoranda; Turner's were finished for public exhibition. Turner's drawings not only displayed his skill, but his temper, for before the engravers finished with them he had quarreled with almost every one concerned. He published the work on his own account, and his business methods were severely criticized, but that did not faze him in the least. He worked on the plates himself, executing

twelve of them. The first plate of the series was an aquatint; the others were mezzotint and etching combined — a peculiarly Turnerian mixture. Still, the "Liber Studiorum" made up a notable portfolio of landscape, and showed the painter's growing power.

Turner's capacity for work was always great. In 1808 he accepted the professorship of perspective in the Royal Academy, gave indifferent lectures, but was able to illustrate them satisfactorily, and yet never stopped designing for books, magazines, and portfolios, and painting picture after picture. The "Wreck of the Minotaur" and "Abingdon" (1810) were followed by the "Apollo and the Python" (1811), "Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps" (1812), "Frosty Morning" (1813), "Dido and Æneas" (1814). It was about this time that he began appending poetical quotations to his pictures, taken from an alleged poem of his own concoction called "Fallacies of Hope"; and it was at this time, too, that he painted one of his favorite pictures, the "Dido Building Carthage" (1815). His great advocate, Mr. Ruskin, rightly enough declared it a "nonsense" picture; but Turner thought so highly of it that he decreed in his will that it should hang beside a large Claude in the National Gallery, that all the world might see how vastly he surpassed the ancient.

The climax of his first period seems to have been reached in "Crossing the Brook" (1815), a picture showing much knowledge of landscape, but rather indifferent in color and a little prosaic in detail. After this he was much in the north, making designs for Whitaker's "History of Richmondshire"; in 1818 he went to Scotland to illustrate Scott's "Provincial Antiquities," and the following year he was twice on the Continent, and for the first time visited Italy. His second period and style dates from the Italian visit,— about 1820,— and is marked by a greater striving for grandeur of composition, stronger light, and more brilliancy of coloring. The pictures were warmer, fuller, freer, and one of them, the "Cologne," when placed on exhibition in the Royal Academy in 1826, was so bright that it quite "killed" a Lawrence hanging near it. The story goes that Turner, to please Lawrence, dimmed his picture with a solution of lampblack, and then washed it off after the exhibition. Some other pictures of this period were the "Bay of Baiæ" (1823), "Dido Directing the Equipment of the Fleet" (1828), "View of Orvieto" (1830), and about the same time the famous "Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus." Turner never allowed

THE "FIGHTING TÉMÉRAIRE," BY J. M. W. TURNER.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

his brush to rest without taking up the pencil, and wherever he went he was known as the little man with the pencil in his hand. His production was enormous, for while he was throwing off canvas after canvas, he was also making drawings for the "Rivers of England," the "Ports and Harbors of England," the "Rivers of France," besides illustrations for the poems of Scott, Byron, Rogers, Milton, Campbell.

About 1830 he must have visited Holland, for he began exhibiting sea-pieces Dutch in subject; and about 1832 he made his first visit to Venice. Once more Italy influenced him profoundly. Venice, with its wandering, unsubstantial reflection in the tide, and its fitful, capricious coloring, seemed to intoxicate his esthetic sense. The spirit of his work became more dream-like than ever; the color began to flame, and the execution to wander. Fantasy, subtlety, mystery, indefiniteness, became marked qualities, and his third manner began to appear. This was not a period of unrelieved decline, as we have been told. It is true that his pictures became more vague, more obscure in meaning, and at times they dropped into sheer weakness. The "Golden Bough" (1834), the "Ehrenbreitstein" (1835), the "Mercury and Argus" (1836), the "Modern Italy" and the "Ancient Italy" (1838) are all of them somewhat confusing and unsatisfactory; but the fire of the man's genius was not burnt out. It was to flame higher than ever in the celebrated "Fighting Téméraire" (1839), which Mr. Ruskin thought his last effort of perfect power; and there was to be a final display of it in the "Rain, Steam, and Speed" (1844), a picture thought by artists to be the painter's best effort.

Still, there can be no question of Turner's growing erraticism after 1832. He was failing, becoming incoherent, and the shallow public began to laugh. "Blackwood's" sneered and "Punch" ridiculed his vagueness. The town wits spoke of his "Snow-storm" as "Soap-suds and Whitewash." Turner, with all his gruffness and alligator imperviousness, felt the attacks keenly enough. But his fame went on increasing notwithstanding, for in 1843 the first volume of "Modern Painters" was published, and Ruskin's eloquence made a stir.

In 1842 Turner was ill, and by 1845 the man was done for artistically, mind and sight both slowly deserting him. There followed a few years of weakness, and then a final scene for which Turner was perhaps not mentally responsible. He had acquired

the habit of disappearing from his home and friends. In 1851 he was gone longer than usual, and his whereabouts was only discovered through a letter lodged in the pocket of an old coat. Search was made for him, and the great painter of light and sky, the man who had lived all his life in palaces of the sun, was found dying in a dingy lodging-house in Chelsea, where he was stopping with a Mrs. Booth, whose name, for some unknown reason, he had assumed. Not even the scandal-mongers could make much of it, for it was palpably the act of a lonely, half-demented old man. The day after his finding, December 19, 1851, he breathed his last. There was a large funeral, and Turner was buried in St. Paul's, near Reynolds. He left one hundred and forty thousand pounds to be quarreled over — one thousand pounds of it for his own monument. The quarrel was compromised, and finally the Royal Academy got twenty thousand pounds, and the National Gallery his pictures and drawings. There were over nineteen thousand studies of various kinds found in his studio. His life had been devoted wholly to making pictures and money, and he had been successful in both pursuits.

There seems little in Turner's life, aside from his art, that is not commonplace. He was deaf and dumb to everything but painting. Literature, philosophy, science, and language were unknown quantities to him. He even wrote and spoke English badly. Illiteracy always marked him. For all his shrewdness as to money and his genius in art, he remained to the last uneducated, unpolished, uncouth, ill-tempered. There was something of inheritance in this, no doubt, for his mother was ungovernable and finally insane. Certainly Turner drew off by himself more and more as he grew older, aware that he was not fitted for society, and yet too proud to admit it. Not only love of the craft, but force of circumstances, seemed to center everything in his life about his art. He must have dwelt in his own landscapes, studying them, brooding over them, until they grew colossal, unreal, fantastic. One can trace in these landscapes the expansion of his imagination — the start with the simple aspects of nature, the gradual enhancing and exaltation of the facts, and their final disappearance in bewildering clouds of light and color. Commonplace as he was in his life, he was in his art a dreamer of such dreams as poetry is made of, a man of sublime imagination, which finally overleaped itself and fell into the bizarre.

Turner artistically cannot be understood except by considering

that he cared for only two things — his own conception of poetic landscape, and his own notion of what constituted good form and color. The Ruskinian idea that he loved nature, and that he was only a humble and faithful recorder of her beauties, seems peculiarly misleading. He was a Londoner, living most of his life in his studio, and going out to nature only for materials. "Pictures!" he exclaimed. "Give me a canvas, colors, a room to work in with a door that will lock, and it is not difficult to paint pictures." That sentence speaks the painter precisely. He carried his nature in his imagination, and he painted his pictures out of his head. He never had the rural feeling of a Gainsborough nor the love of locality of a Constable. His landscapes have no existence in nature. They are neither English, French, Swiss, nor Italian; they are Turnerian. True enough, he named many of his pictures and drawings after English and Continental places. He was shrewd enough to know that a local title often "sold the picture." But when his clients and admirers visited the spot and tried to fix the point of view they had difficulty at once. Why? Because the pictures were "compositions"—some of them unadulterated pictorial fiction.

Turner was no machine to record facts; he cared only for effects. He probably distorted and falsified more facts than any painter in the history of art. One cannot think of anything he ever painted which is completely true. Even the "Frosty Morning," which Englishmen swear by for its truth, will not bear analysis; and when it comes to the really great "Ulysses and Polyphemus," it is absolutely impossible. His book-drawings and river landscapes are picturesque arrangements; his grandiloquent canvases, like the "Mercury and Argus," the "Bay of Baiæ," and "Caligula's Palace," are false in form, tone, and color; and he never did a Venetian piece in which an habitué of Venice could trace topography. Yet one may venture to say that Turner's Venice is more Venetian in spirit than Venice itself, and that such an extravagance as the "Ulysses and Polyphemus" is one of the finest pieces of decorative splendor in the whole range of painting. Turner knowingly distorted the truth. In his first period he was timid about doing so, and elongated a tower, suppressed a light, or forced a hue half apologetically; but when he reached his climax and started upon the "Ulysses and Polyphemus," he seemed to have thrown nature to the winds, and said, "I 'll paint a work of art." And he did.

Of course such an attitude toward nature is quite incomprehensible to the realist—the man who sees only the objective facts in nature. And yet, shocking as it may sound, it is the proper attitude of mind for the production of great pictures. Indeed, it is not too much to say that Turner succeeded largely by virtue of disregarding, even falsifying, nature. His position was substantially that of Michelangelo, Delacroix, and Millet — the final position taken by all geniuses. There is a struggle for years to express ideas, emotions, and sentiments through the established conventions of painting, and then comes emancipation by revising or, as in Turner's case, by defying the convention. Laws of art seem made for great artists to ignore. How could Turner express himself with Gainsborough's brown trees, Poussin's leaden skies, or even with the literal forms of nature itself? Can you tell the mirage-like, floating quality of Venice seen from the lagoons by exactly locating the Campanile, San Giorgio, and the Salute? Can you give the opalescent coloring of palace, wave, and sky by painting pink walls, green water, and red sunsets? Imagine how the classic David or the realistic Bastien-Lepage would have painted the "Ulysses and Polyphemus," and then go back to the National Gallery and see Turner's picture, with its rising sun barred with orange clouds, its far-reaching, cirrus-flecked sky, its mysterious cobalt of the distant sea, its blood-red and golden waves in the foreground, its red-flagged ship, and its spectral figure on the mountain-top. You may laugh at it as nature, if you please, but you cannot laugh at it as art. In its nobility and serenity it is as classic as Æschylus; in its decorative splendor it is as Gothic as Shakspere. Measure it with a realistic yardstick, and then you may as well break the stick; for the picture will not conform, nor will it be cast out.

To quarrel with Turner because he did not record like a Rousseau or a Constable is to miss him entirely. The facts of nature were only chessmen which he placed on the board where they would produce the most effective results. What mattered it if trees and mountains and castles were lacking in truth of detail, provided they were not lacking in beauty of line and composition? In the presence of a splendid sweep of color, why cavil about truth of tone or the exact placing of a shadow? He knew very well when he forced the note or suppressed it entirely. There was no ignorance or carelessness. The book of nature and the book of art he understood better than almost any landscape-artist of any time. He

A FROSTY MORNING, BY J. M. W. TURNER.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

simply insisted that nature should play a subordinate part to art and express his meanings — speak his way of seeing things. And there we have the personal element in art so predominant in the artistic make-up of Michelangelo. If one believes with Véron that art consists in the individuality of the artist, then there can be no quarrel with the painter of the "Ulysses and Polyphemus" and the "Rain, Steam, and Speed."

In accepting Turner's point of view, it is not necessary to go to an extreme and hail his distortions of fact as particularly fetching, newly discovered truths. Mr. Ruskin's enthusiasm enabled him to see many things in Turner's pictures that never existed, and in recent days the impressionists have found out that he was one of their artistic forefathers. All honor to Mr. Ruskin! Let painters who never read his books sneer at his opinions if they will, but at least he made the world look at and study Turner's pictures. As for the claim of the impressionists, it is based wholly on Turner's vagueness and his light scheme of color. That he had a passion for the splendor of light there can be no doubt; but, unlike Monet, he never tried to lift the pitch of light and shadow by transposing the scale. What he attempted was to attain with oils the luminous and brilliant effects of water-colors. It must not be forgotten that he was at first a painter in water-colors. He took up oils later on, and then he used them as a water-colorist, striving for a water-color effect. If such canvases as the "Ehrenbreitstein," the Carthage pictures, or the "Marriage of the Adriatic" be looked upon as "large water-colors," as Constable called them, their pitch of color and light would seem accounted for. Intense, blazing sunlight and pale-colored shadows, given in tonal relation, were things Turner never attempted. He sometimes used blue for a shadow, and so he did scarlet; but he would have used pea-green or orange just as quickly if it would repeat a note or help out a color-scheme.

Turner's technique is perhaps more complex and less susceptible of explanation than his point of view. That his pictures show impossible shadows, false lights, and colors not true in value is no proof that he did not know and could not paint the truthful appearance. He deliberately falsified for effect of composition or of color. There is no doubting his intimate knowledge of nature. He could draw accurately enough when he chose to do so. The late George Inness was fond of saying that Turner "could draw figures in a boat,

but not a boat with figures." But Turner perhaps wanted the figures as spots of light and color, and cared little for the boat in itself. It was just so with his whole conception of color. He wanted not the truth of color, but its splendor. And so he placed it about on his canvas as it pleased his decorative plan, regardless of how it was in nature.

It is difficult at this day to judge justly of Turner's handling or of his methods and mediums. Too many of his pictures are merely ruins crumbling on the wall. The attempt to secure the transparent effect of water-color with oils was possibly responsible for this. He blended mediums, used all colors, whether fugitive or not, scumbled, kneaded, and glazed to obtain certain effects that in the end proved only too transient. His glazings crumbled, his whites disintegrated, his colors flew. The Turner rooms in the National Gallery are to-day a sorry sight. On nearly every hand one sees skies that have gone white, golden sunsets that have changed to greenish yellow, seas that have grown brown from the use of fugitive blues, and foregrounds that have sweated black with bitumen. The painter thought "indistinctness was his forte," but he surely could not have anticipated an "indistinctness" through such an appalling chromatic rot.

Turner stands quite alone in English art, as Corot in French art. They both came out of the classic, and Corot favored the naturalism of his day as Turner the romanticism of Scott and Byron. But each one was too pronounced an individual to be grouped with followers of a tradition. They had predecessors and they had followers, but the former were outgrown and contradicted, and the latter never grew into anything like a school. For years the British public looked askance at Turner, even after Mr. Ruskin became his prophet. People could not understand him; and when they were told he was great because of his truth to nature, they became more bewildered than ever. To-day there is a more expansive view taken of art than obtained in days of "Modern Painters." The decorative quality of painting — its value merely as form and color — is better understood; and Turner, who was so elevated in composition, so splendid in color, comes in for a rehearing. Then, too, the intensely realistic period has passed, and people feel that scientific truth and topographical fact are far removed from art. Painting, in its highest sense, is the expression of an idea, a feeling, an emotion, or an impression, and the facts

of nature are only words in the painter's vocabulary. The little artists of the world are ruled by a grammatical formula, but the great ones make language to suit themselves. Turner was surely one of the great ones. Possibly to-day he is exalted beyond his deserts, but there can be no question of his title to a high place. He had the poetic mind and the pictorial sense, and he certainly employed them both with great skill.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

MUCH of the charm of Turner's "Frosty Morning" is in the naturalness and simplicity of its arrangement. There is apparently no attempt at composition, no study of line, nor anything reminiscent of former methods or manners, but merely, as it were, a bit of nature taken on the spot by a snap-shot pocket-camera. A boy is coming down the road, hands in pockets; a man with a gun is watching a horse sniffing the frost-covered ground, while a girl by his side is chafing his ears from the chilling air; a laborer near a cart has paused for a moment in his work on the roadside, while an old woman not far off is limping along. There is no incident. I heard a spectator remark before the original in the National Gallery: "What is it, an interment?"—struck, evidently, by the silence pervading the scene. But there is nothing going on, other than that desultory movement of every-day life common to any rural suburb. For the artist to have made anything like an incident would have been detrimental to the sentiment and effect in the picture, which is that of a frosty morning. It looks like a morning, and a cold one, too. There is a delicate humidity to the atmosphere—a slight haziness, natural when everything is luminous with hoar-frost that floats the landscape into the quiet of the sky. And the sky, too, is characteristic, and is a fitting accompaniment of the peculiar dreaminess of such an effect. It is gray, silvery, yet mellow, warm, tender, with vague, soft forms melting and reappearing, into which the whitened twigs of the skeleton trees gently fade, and which materializes into a long, softly drawn out cloud-bank delicately streaked, and above which a faint line of light is visible. How subtle, mysterious, and tranquil it all is, bathed in the slanting beams of the rising sun!

The rigid hoar-frost melts before his beam.

There is no pronounced coloring anywhere, but a kind of amber-like radiance is suffused over all, into which the pearly glints of light and cooler shadows swim.

It is painted on canvas, three feet nine inches high by five feet nine inches wide, and hangs in the Turner collection of the National Gallery, London.

"The *Téméraire*, an old ninety-eight (named after a French ship taken at Lagos Bay in 1759), was, under command of Captain Eliab Harvey, the second ship in Lord Nelson's division at the battle of Trafalgar, 1805; the *Fougueux*, a French seventy-four, became her prize in that engagement, when the *Téméraire* had forty-seven hands killed and seventy-six wounded on board. She was sold out of the service, at Sheerness, on August 16, 1838, and towed to Rotherhithe to be broken up."

The picture is on canvas, two feet eleven

and a half inches high by three feet eleven and a half inches wide, and is in the Turner collection of the National Gallery, London.

No one can gaze and muse on this beautiful creation by Turner without a feeling of sympathy and regret for the noble old war-ship, no more the victor ship of past glorious days, no flag proudly waving from her masthead,—

> The flag which braved the battle and the breeze
> No longer owns her,—

but gaunt, like a skeleton, and fallen into decay, yet still majestic in her decrepitude, her fearful voyages forever closed and done; and now, in the glory of the setting day,—*her* day, for heaven will glorify her latter end, since unmindful England forgets to do so,—shrouded by mist and smoke and fired by the crimson light of the declining sun, which in retiring seems to invite her to oblivious rest, she is being piloted, by her dark and ominous guide, to the haven of her grave; not neglected entirely, but followed by a few friends, who have not forgotten, and by the moon, that, like heaven's eye, looks down, mindful, too, of her past heroism. The floating buoy indicates the goal to which she is headed, where she will meet her doom.

Such seems to be the sentiment with which the artist invests the final ending of the "Fighting Téméraire," and in which he is again in his element in showing forth the glory of heaven in paint. He fills the overflowing sky with vermilion blushes and sapphire-tinted harmonies, flecked with fire and azure tints, and interpenetrated with gold and amber hues, "from the sunset's radiant springs"; faint, mellow hues of apple-green, pearly grays, and purple mists, softening into dun-colored shades that fade from smoky passages to cool lakes, like vaporous amethysts, as in the crystalline reflections of the boats, the liquid tones of slaty blue, quivering and glimmering with mother-of-pearl and sea-green, all so soft and flowing and neutral, mingling, free and loose, impalpable; and the whole palpitating with warmth and light.

The subject of the "Ulysses and Polyphemus" is familiar to every classic scholar.

> Now off at sea and from the shallows clear
> As far as human voice could reach the ear,
> With taunts the distant giant I accost:
> Hear me, O Cyclop! hear, ungracious host;
> 'T was on no coward, no ignoble slave,
> Thou meditat'st thy meal in yonder cave.
>
> Cyclop! if any, pitying thy disgrace,
> Ask who disfigur'd thus that eyeless face,
> Say 't was Ulysses; 't was his deed, declare,
> Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair;
> Ulysses, far in fighting fields renown'd,
> Before whose arm Troy tumbled to the ground.
>
> Thus I: while raging he repeats his cries
> With hands uplifted to the starry skies.
>
> POPE'S Odyssey, Book IX.

Turner here touches the final note in the loom of his fancy's coloring. Under a cope of sky flecked and agitated with cloud and flying vapor, whose fluent expanse is kindled with crimson by the rising sun, which flings its golden and amber beams shooting transparence through the whole, and charming the air with a mellow radiance, the gorgeous galley of Ulysses, issuing like an apparition from the deep embosomed splendor, glides arrogantly away from the Cyclop's abode, mingling its luminous sails with the lavish pomp and ripe magnificence above, and its nymph-encircled keel with the crystal flood beneath.

In the original — as also in the engraving — Ulysses may be made out high on the poop of the boat, near the mizzenmast, brandishing a torch with a gesture of bravado. But it is not so much this insignificant detail that counts as the fact that it is the vessel itself which personifies the hero in its defiant attitude, with its mizzenmast pointing, like a fin-

DIDO BUILDING CARTHAGE, BY J. M. W. TURNER.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

ger in derision, at the shadowy recumbent figure of the giant; its foremast (laden with jeering sailors), with its flying cordage, as though to lash the monster; while the mainmast, with its angrily flapping sail and red flag aloft, seems to flaunt it triumphantly in sailing away. It is in the boat that the artist seeks to express the taunt of Ulysses.

It is on canvas, and measures four feet three inches high by six feet seven inches wide, and is in the Turner collection at the National Gallery.

What an air of another world exhales in the delicate creation of "Dido Building Carthage"! It is like something fashioned in a dream, something of a land beyond all seas. There is a mild effulgence in the light; the tranquil air is imbued with the splendor of morning. There is also a limitless depth of space and a feeling of repose — almost of enchantment — that is contagious and disposes one to reverie. All is steeped in a rich golden tone. No one portion absorbs the attention more than another. The eye wanders in meditation, resting now upon the piles of classic architecture, gilded softly by the mellow brightness; or now upon the confused mass of workers against which the matronly figure of Queen Dido is relieved; or upon the opposite bank of the river, where in the foreground, embowered in foliage, is the finished monument to the memory of her murdered husband Sychæus; or off far away into the atmosphere, where the sun is laboring to dispel the warm vapors that envelop it with a tender, hazy radiance; and here you may feel inclined to dwell, and may fancy the pearly mists falling and rising and circling about, with ethereal blendings and vanishings. The subtle movement of this part of the sky — of all the sky, in fact — is admirably expressed, and gives a sense of palpitating warmth and airiness. Turner, of all artists, was supreme in the treatment of sky. He gave wing to his fancy here, and let it "cloudward soar." One must be dull of soul indeed who could pass by his finest works and fail to be touched by the clarity of his tints — their almost pristine purity. It is this peculiar clearness that lends itself naturally to the transparency and depth of sky. And then the poetry that he gets into his palette! There is a noble sentiment in his coloring, and a self-restraining art even in his loftiest flights — his greatest tumult and gorgeousness: "So much of earth, so much of heaven." He is the only artist of the English school who follows implicitly the poet's exhortation:

> Break the mesh
> Of the Fancy's silken leash;
> Quickly break her prison-string,
> And such joys as these she 'll bring.
> Let the wingèd Fancy roam;
> Pleasure never is at home.

This picture and a companion piece, the "Sun Rising in a Mist," — also a magnificent work, — were bequeathed by the artist to the National Gallery of London, on condition that they should be hung between two pictures by Claude Lorrain, of about the same size, which are placed by their side. The "Dido" is on canvas, and measures five feet half an inch high by seven feet five and a half inches wide. T. C.

JOHN CONSTABLE

THE HAY WAIN, BY JOHN CONSTABLE.

CHAPTER XV

JOHN CONSTABLE

(1776–1837)

CONSTABLE, in his birth, his education, and his disposition, forms a striking contrast to his great contemporary Turner. He was something of a social character with gentlemanly instincts, and in his view of art he was Turner's point-to-point opposite. The man who could exclaim with considerable warmth, "Ideal art in landscape is all nonsense!" would to-day be classed as a realist. He evidently so considered himself, for in his letters he is always harping on "truth," and the futility of following anything but the nature model. As for Turner, it is not putting it too strong to say that he cared not a rap about truth, and that he considered "nature" as only so much stone-quarry from which he could gather building material. Constable always spoke of the Turnerian landscapes as "golden dreams." He admired them in his way without fully comprehending the altitude of their painter. How could he comprehend him? The men belonged in different strata of the art atmosphere. Turner was an eagle, as Corot said of Rousseau, wheeling above the upper cirrus in the full blaze of sunlight; while Constable was only a lark singing over the woods and misty fields of England — singing a song of much charm but of limited range.

Constable's early years were passed in the Suffolk country, which may account for his somewhat matter-of-fact view of landscape. He knew the real too intimately to nurse any delusions about the ideal. His father was a miller, owning the mills at Flatford, East Bergholt, and Dedham, a man of some wealth. The son was sent to boarding-school at seven, and afterward to Dedham School, where it is said he learned Latin and French and be-

came a good penman. His father destined him for a bishop, but was willing to compromise on a miller. At eighteen Constable tried the milling business for one year, but he spent most of his time sketching with a friend named Dunthorne, and copying drawings by Girtin. Sir George Beaumont had loaned him the Girtin drawings, and it was Beaumont who persuaded him to go up to London to study art. The first visit was tentative. He met in London Joseph Farington, R.A., and J. T. Smith, who probably gave him some elementary ideas about art. Smith taught him something about etching, but his instruction at this time was probably desultory and fragmentary. Constable soon came home to help his father in the mill, but returned to London again in 1799, and was then entered at the schools of the Royal Academy. He began as a portrait-painter, with an occasional dash at the historical composition, copied Ruysdael, and traveled some in Derbyshire. In 1802 one of his landscapes was hung at the Royal Academy exhibition, and after that he devoted himself almost exclusively to landscape. Encouraged by Benjamin West, he now took up the serious study of nature. He writes to a friend: "In the last two years I have been running after pictures and seeking truth at second hand. I have not endeavored to represent nature with the same elevation of mind with which I set out, but have rather tried to make my performance look like the work of other men. . . . I shall return to Bergholt, where I shall endeavor to get a pure and unaffected manner of representing the scenes that may employ me. . . . There is room enough for a natural painter. The great vice of the present day is bravura, an attempt to do something beyond the truth. Fashion always had and always will have its day, but truth in all things only will last, and can only have just claims on posterity." The next year (1803) he consoles himself with thinking that he will "some time or other make good pictures." But he was never a popular painter. He had friends among the artists, painters like Jackson, Wilkie, and Stothard, but the public passed him without comment. At thirty-eight he had sold no pictures, except to friends, and what money he earned had come from portraits and making copies after Reynolds.

But Constable had perseverance, even though he felt himself unappreciated. He clung to landscape-painting, and declined a position of drawing master which Dr. Fisher had offered him. He continued sending modest-looking pictures to the exhibitions

WATERLOO BRIDGE—A SKETCH BY JOHN CONSTABLE.

DIPLOMA GALLERY, ROYAL ACADEMY, LONDON.

of the Royal Academy, and giving them the still more modest titles of "Landscape" or "Study of Nature." It was not in him to put the poetry of his picture in the title. He rather despised that method of catching the attention and thought it meretricious — unworthy of an artist.

In 1811 it is said his health was impaired by his attachment to a young woman named Maria Bicknell, with whom he had been in love from his boyhood days. It seems that her parents objected to a marriage, and presumably that did not please Constable. A mill-owner's son and an unsuccessful painter was no great "catch." In 1813 Constable writes the lady of his love about his success with his Academy picture called "Landscape — Boys Fishing." He knows Turner and likes his pictures, and is momentarily hopeful for his own future. The next year he sold two pictures besides coming into some property by the death of his parents, and the Bicknell opposition was broken down. The marriage took place in 1816, and the couple went to London to live. They also had a supplementary house at Hampstead, where, after 1826, they lived continuously. Constable was elected an A.R.A. in 1819, which he owed "solely to his own unsupported, unpatronized merits," as his friend Dr. Fisher remarked. That year he exhibited and sold the celebrated "White Horse" picture for one hundred pounds, and the next year "Stratford Mill" for a like sum. But the first real breath of fame that came to him was from France. He had sold three landscapes to a Frenchman, and two of them were sent by their owner to the Salon of 1824. One of the pictures was the "Hay Wain." It made something of a stir among the young romanticists of France, and Delacroix, their leader, is said to have repainted his "Massacre of Scio" after seeing it. Constable received a gold medal, and was also honored at a supplementary exhibition at Lille. But England had scant praise for him. He sold a picture occasionally in his own country, but he was usually at his wit's end for money. In 1828 Mr. Bicknell died, and twenty thousand pounds came to Mrs. Constable. She did not live the year out, and Constable was left with seven children.

At last Constable was made a Royal Academician. The honor was late in coming, and he lost his patience when Lawrence told him he was fortunate. He had become embittered by neglect, and became more so as he aged; yet he plodded on in the path he had laid out for himself. The "Salisbury Cathedral from the

Meadows," the "Waterloo Bridge," and the "Valley Farm" aroused no enthusiasm. Twenty mezzotints after Constable's drawings and fifteen plates of "English Landscape" fared no better. The public did not care for them, and Constable felt (as he wrote) that his "life and occupation were useless." He struggled on under great mental depression, painting "Arundel Castle" and delivering some lectures at the Royal Academy. Twice he had been seriously ill, and finally, on the morning of April 1, 1837, he was found dead in his bed. He was buried in Hampstead churchyard, and from the day of his burial his countrymen began to think better of him.

It is not surprising that Constable attained no exalted position during his life. There was nothing popular or catching about his art. It showed no grand subjects of the Claude-Salvator-Turner kind; it was not in the least dramatic; it had not a rag of romantic passion about it. His themes were field and wood and shore—low-lying scenes with farm-houses, wagons, animals, canals, mills — almost everything that was pastoral, almost nothing that was heroic or historical. Occasionally he painted a picture reminiscent of Turner in its mountains and sky, but usually he did not care for mountain landscapes and knew little about nature's grandeur. His attitude of mind taught him to love the more familiar trees, meadows, atmospheres, and clouds — to love them for their simplicity, their unpretentious charm, their characteristic beauty. He used to say that painting was with him "but another name for feeling"; and one may feel just as keenly about a Bergholt mill as about a Roman ruin, may grow as emotional over Weymouth Bay as over Venetian lagoons. The poetic significance of objects does not lie in expanse or bulk, nor does the essence of all sentiment hang upon romantic antiquity. The exciting cause is, after all, of small consequence; it is the "feeling" aroused that furnishes forth the poetry. Wordsworth and Constable had the same view. Byron could sneer at their nature in favor of Sunium's height or the Isles of Greece, but when the glamour of romanticism had passed, and people came back to every-day scenes and common joys, they found the most enduring beauty was near their own door-steps. To be sure, Wordsworth wrote much prosy poetry, and Constable painted some landscapes of a corresponding quality. That could not be avoided. In art, when the fact is too strongly insisted upon, the "feeling" is sure to suffer. Both men had great reverence for

nature *per se*, and pursued truth into the last ditch. They were protestants against the exaggerations of romanticism, and truth was their very watchword. But who shall say they had not also beauty? Does all the glory of landscape blaze from the seven hills of Rome? And is there no loveliness in a Suffolk valley or a Hampstead Heath?

Yet it may be doubted if Constable is to-day appreciated for his poetic sentiment. Painters have taken up his art in recent years, and speak his name with some reverence because realism is always in the air and in Constable they are pleased to see the first English "realist" in landscape. It is his truth rather than his "feeling" that they enjoy, his breadth of handling rather than his mood that they admire. Yet Constable's truth was not absolute. For his day it was excellent, but it was not so wholly original as enthusiastic biographers are pleased to think. He talked much against art methods in favor of nature unalloyed; but the fact is, he arrived at nature, like every other painter, by studying art formulas. During his first summer at Ipswich he "saw Gainsborough in every hedge and hollow tree." When a student in London he "fagged at copying Ruysdael." Precisely. Take the nature views of Gainsborough and Ruysdael in equal parts, add Constable's personality and some Suffolk landscape facts, and there you have the Constable receipt for nature truth. He could not escape the art traditions of the past. The tale goes that Sir George Beaumont asked him where he placed his brown tree, and Constable's answer was that he did not use brown trees. The story is pretty, but again the fact is, Constable used them when it pleased him. The famous "Valley Farm" is a "brown-fiddle" picture all through, and the "Corn-field" inclines the same way. He composed, too, after the academic rule, with a dark foreground, a light middle distance, and a bright sky, balancing objects symmetrically, and throwing in spots of light where they would glitter to the best advantage. It is not just, however, to say that this was always his manner. He was oftener green than brown; often he sketched a scene with little thought of composition; and there are Constables quite free from "spotty" lights. Such fine pictures as the "Yarmouth Jetty" and "Opening the Lock" in Sir Charles Tennent's collection, and the sketches at the South Kensington Museum, reveal Constable much better than the large, labored canvases in the National Gallery. He had his mannerisms, but usually he was broad and simple in

foliage, in hills, in seas. Every phase of Suffolk landscape interested him. "I love every stile and stump and lane in the village," he exclaimed, "and as long as I am able to hold a brush I shall never cease to paint them." He loved the larger features of nature with just as much fervor, and was perhaps fonder of nature's restlessness—its moving air, clouds, and water—than its repose. West had told him that "light and shadow never stood still." The observation sounds trite to-day, but it made a lasting impression upon the youthful Constable. All through his pictures one sees bowling clouds, voyaging rain-sheets, flying shadows, dancing waters. And under English skies he gave, as best he could, English color. Sometimes his palette was quite brilliant, but usually it was somber with grays, blues, greens, and browns. Occasionally one finds some blackness in his trees owing to the use of bitumen, and some heat in his clouds due to a warm underbasing that has worked to the surface. One would hardly call him a colorist. Technically he was not wanting in knowledge or vigor, but there is little that is remarkable about his handling. His title to fame does not rest upon his craftsmanship.

Constable's name is placed high to-day, and his influence has been wide-spread and much talked about. It has even passed into history that his picture of the "Hay Wain," exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1824, was responsible for the Fontainebleau-Barbizon painters of 1830. That claim is so prodigious, and it is made so persistently, that a few facts and dates should be put down and coldly compared. In 1824 Dupré was twelve years old, Rousseau was the same age, Diaz was fifteen and working at Sèvres, Daubigny was seven, Corot was a young man studying in Rome. What could be the influence of the "Hay Wain" upon these youngsters who had not yet taken up art, who probably never saw the picture in question? There was no journeying to Fontainebleau until about 1833, and no landscape-painting in France that at all resembled Constable's work until much later. Is there any evidence whatever for the Constable claim, or is it only another one of the half-cocked conclusions of art-history? The picture influenced Delacroix undoubtedly, but more by its breadth of handling than its view of nature. After seeing it he repainted his "Massacre of Scio" in a freer manner, that is all. Jules Breton has already pointed out that the influence upon Dupré and Rousseau was the Dutch pictures in the Louvre rather than the Constable picture.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, BY JOHN CONSTABLE.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

He is undoubtedly right. Landscape descended from Italy in two lines. Frenchmen like Watelet and Bertin derived directly from Claude; the Dutchmen Ruysdael and Everdingen derived from Salvator Rosa. The Dutch inheritance was modified and localized with Hobbema. When the Claude tradition failed to satisfy Constable, he turned to Ruysdael for a more intimate knowledge of nature; when the same tradition failed to please Rousseau and Dupré, they turned to Hobbema for similar knowledge. Eventually the Frenchmen, living far into the century, worked out the *paysage intime*, which neither Hobbema nor Constable ever fully accomplished. At the start they may have felt some English influence passed down from Delacroix and Bonington, but its extent has been overestimated.

Constable's pictures have carried farther among the painters of landscape in England and America than in France. Among all artists he is ranked as one of the chiefs of the realistic landscape, and is admired for both his sincerity and his truth. He is not undeserving of painters' praise, yet there is another side of him to be considered. He was a lover of nature for its own sake—a painter devoted to the beauty of blue skies, traveling clouds, atmospheres, lights, and the goodly heritage of English sea and soil beneath them. His choice of subject and mood of mind are also worthy of admiration.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

CONSTABLE resided some time at Hampstead, one of London's charming suburbs, where after his death he was buried. Keats lived and wrote much of his finest work there, Leigh Hunt for a long time had a house there, and Hogarth the painter planted a holly at the north margin of the heath, which is still preserved. The heath, which is high ground, being four hundred and thirty feet above the level of the sea, is one of the most open and picturesque places in the immediate vicinity of the great metropolis, and is a favorite and justly valued resort for holiday-makers, being visited on public festivals by vast numbers of Londoners. It is two hundred and forty acres in extent, and its wild and irregular beauty, its undulating alternations of hill and hollow, make it a refreshing contrast to the trim elegance of the parks. It is owned by the Metropolitan Board of Works, for the unrestricted use of the public.

Constable loved the heath, and left a number of paintings commemorative of the place, among which is the little one reproduced here in black and white —a reduction to about half the size of the original. It hangs in the South Kensington Museum.

It was chiefly clouds that fascinated the artist, and this is indicated in all his pictures. In the South Kensington

Museum may be seen, by his hand, numbers of sketches and studies of clouds and skies merely. He possesses great claim to distinction as a painter of English skies. He keenly felt the splendor — the dazzling effulgence — of the light in his luminous masses of cumuli and other vaporous forms, and endeavored to suggest their movement — their fleeting, dissolving, and ethereal character.

In this beautiful little painting of "Hampstead Heath" there is a pervading sentiment of prayer. The artist's spirit must have flown out to those delicate and floating forms of brightness. The glory of the declining day is full of pensiveness and elevated feeling. This heath, this calm and quiet expanse, with its canopy of light and adoration above, and its far-reaching green plains seen through the vaporous air and glowing softly in the reflected radiance of the sky, with its pervading breath of peace, its inviolable quietness, seems like an invitation to communion with nature and nature's God.

The picture was not painted on the spot, evidently, but in the studio from some sketch; and this was Constable's usual way of working. It is smoothly and delicately finished. There is not that spontaneity of touch which is characteristic of his studies and sketches from nature. There is a flock of sheep going along a pathway, headed by their shepherd in the foreground, and the movement of the mass is well suggested.

Constable's studies and sketches from nature are priceless, because they are instinct with that vis-à-vis contact with the animated thing, and therefore possess that spontaneity of technique which naturally flows from the unconscious inspiration of such occasions. The South Kensington Museum possesses a number of these gems, and also the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, some score or so hanging upon the staircase. From these latter the present one is selected, showing a scene on the river Thames above Waterloo Bridge. This is certainly a *joli morceau*, and discloses the true spirit of Constable, anxious only to interpret the movement, sparkle, and animation of the life he saw in the flying clouds, the dancing water and sunshine, and the flashes and specks of humanity and boats. Things are delightfully suggested; the inspiration is given; neither more nor less is evoked, and this is sufficient. Everything is free and fluttering, and all so exhilarating, simple, and true. There is not that complete statement of facts as in his finished works (which are in comparison always dull and heavy), and yet there is more truth, simply because he has not labored to state the thing exactly, but has let nature do part of the saying. Look at the clouds, for instance, and see how much fresher, freer, more impalpable they are than in his more finished works. They lie more in the atmosphere, and are more masterly in every way.

In the engraving I have endeavored to follow the dashing character of the handling, and to preserve its accidental qualities and, above all, the flatness of the tones and their values.

There is a charming freshness and mellowness to the coloring of the original. The grays are pearly and warm; his purples and blues exquisite in their neutrality; his greens vivacious yet cool and intermingled with lively touches of reds and blues. The whole is subdued and harmonious, "silvery, windy, and delicious; all health, and the absence of everything stagnant," to quote his own words in his enjoyment of nature.

Constable is no less true to earth than Turner is to heaven. Between these two great names English landscape may be said to resemble Wordsworth's "Skylark": "True to the kindred points of heaven and home." After having with Turner soared cloudward upon fancy's

THE CORN-FIELD, BY JOHN CONSTABLE.

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

wing, and bathed our souls in his glowing tints, it seems good to descend to *terra firma* once more and bask with Constable on his quiet heaths and pastures; to drink at his cool streams and pools, and ruminate in the shade of his breezy trees, or rest our eyes in his tranquil landscapes, loaded with huge and thought-inspiring clouds; to "lean and loaf" at our ease, or ramble in spirit through his rich and homely meadows and fields, such as the peaceful and rural scene of the "Corn-field."

Constable makes you feel that matter has much weight and value. His trees are sturdy and of robust growth and full in texture; and his clouds are heavy with rain and thunder. His pictures are well grounded in values. His sky is the earth more rarefied — never volatile, as is often the case with Turner, but well related with the ground and foliage. His eye travels constantly from the soil to the zenith, never looking upon any object without observing its corresponding value in the atmosphere. Thus in the "Corn-field" the sheen of the sunlight upon the golden grain in the distance is carefully calculated with the same light which shines upon the grass and road of the foreground, and with the bright clouds immediately above the corn-field, as well as with those shining at the top of the picture. In like manner is the sunlight upon the foliage balanced with the shades upon the clouds and the patch of blue sky into which the topmost contour of the tall trees softens. Thus he bases his pictures in chiaroscuró, binding them strongly together in a complete and rounded whole; so that the "Corn-field," for example, might be turned upside down and would still be agreeable as a disposition of light and dark patches. A picture by him is an entire painting, full and strong, with no vacancies; in coloring warm and rich; grayish above, with neutral browns and greens below; dark-looking at a distance (sometimes inclining to heaviness), yet penetrated with light when approached; solidly built, and harmonizing well with the gold of its frame, and pervaded often by a sentiment of home and peace.

The "Corn-field" was painted in 1826, and presented to the National Gallery, London, in 1837, by an association of gentlemen who purchased it of the painter's executors. It is on canvas, measuring four feet nine and a half inches high by four feet one inch wide.

I engraved the picture of the "Hay Wain" (as well as the "Corn-field") in as bold a manner as I could command, because I wanted each line to print up as fat and full as possible, as I felt by this means I might arrive at something analogous to the rich and unctuous coloring characteristic of the original. Much that was in the original had, of course, to be sacrificed — all its surface, in fact, and a new surface substituted (which, however, happens in all engraving). Whole legions of details are ruthlessly swept away, and characteristic lines and stipples sought out or invented to supply their places. Thus, for instance, the foreground of the "Hay Wain" is composed of pebbles and stones; but in the small reduction of the engraving these came down so minute that were they engraved it would have necessitated such microscopic work that printing would have been impossible, and the larger fact of the vigor of effect and color could not have been secured. So it was throughout the picture. And thus it is with all art: sacrifice is the rule. Art lives by sacrifice. Constable perceived this, and did not therefore paint the skin but the spirit of nature. It is Blake who says, "The devil, not God, made nature"; and the devil is forever seeking to befuddle the artist, whispering his maxim, "Skin for skin"; but it is only by diving beneath the mere letter that he can arrive at the spirit, which is God. A work of

art may be likened unto the kingdom of God, to attain to which the artist must sacrifice the insignificant and worrying details of the rind of nature — must penetrate beneath the glittering surface to come at the breadth, repose, and fullness in which alone the true effect, the picture, can have life.

The most difficult thing to secure in an engraving is that breadth, fullness, and softness that contributes to the dignity so much, and to the atmosphere and repose, of all great works of art; at the same time to retain the firmness and roundness of the drawing. To achieve this it is necessary, in conjunction with the magnifying-lens, to work the engraving at the range of two or three feet, for the softness of forms and the flatness of tints, so vital to breadth, can be seen only at a distance; what might appear beneath the lens as a smooth, soft form, or tint, will often, if placed at a slight distance, prove very spotty and defective. Look at the cloud-forms in the "Hay Wain" beneath a magnifying-lens, and see how very different they appear at a distance of two feet. With the lens nothing is visible but lines. The lens is used only for cutting with, but to see what is really being done the long range is resorted to. Thus, to get a trifling delicate accent, something, for instance, very subtile, vague, and indefinite, as the peculiar indentations to the contours of the cumuli clouds,— a mere nothing, yet of vital moment to the character of the original,— we mark the form at a distance, then, bringing the block up beneath the lens, it is engraved, and glanced at again from a distance, and this is repeated until the desired effect is obtained.

The "Hay Wain" was one of the first pictures by Constable that contributed directly to his fame. He exhibited it at the Royal Academy in 1821, and three years later in Paris, where it went under the title of "A Landscape — Noon." It created quite a sensation among the French landscape-painters, who, it is said, were struck with its wonderful freshness and truth to nature. "The next exhibition in Paris," wrote a friend to him from that city, "will teem with your imitators." The picture on that occasion gained for him a gold medal from Louis Philippe.

It is painted on canvas, four feet two and three quarter inches high by six feet one inch wide, and was presented to the National Gallery by Mr. Henry Vaughan. T. C.

SIR DAVID WILKIE

CHAPTER XVI

SIR DAVID WILKIE

(1785–1841)

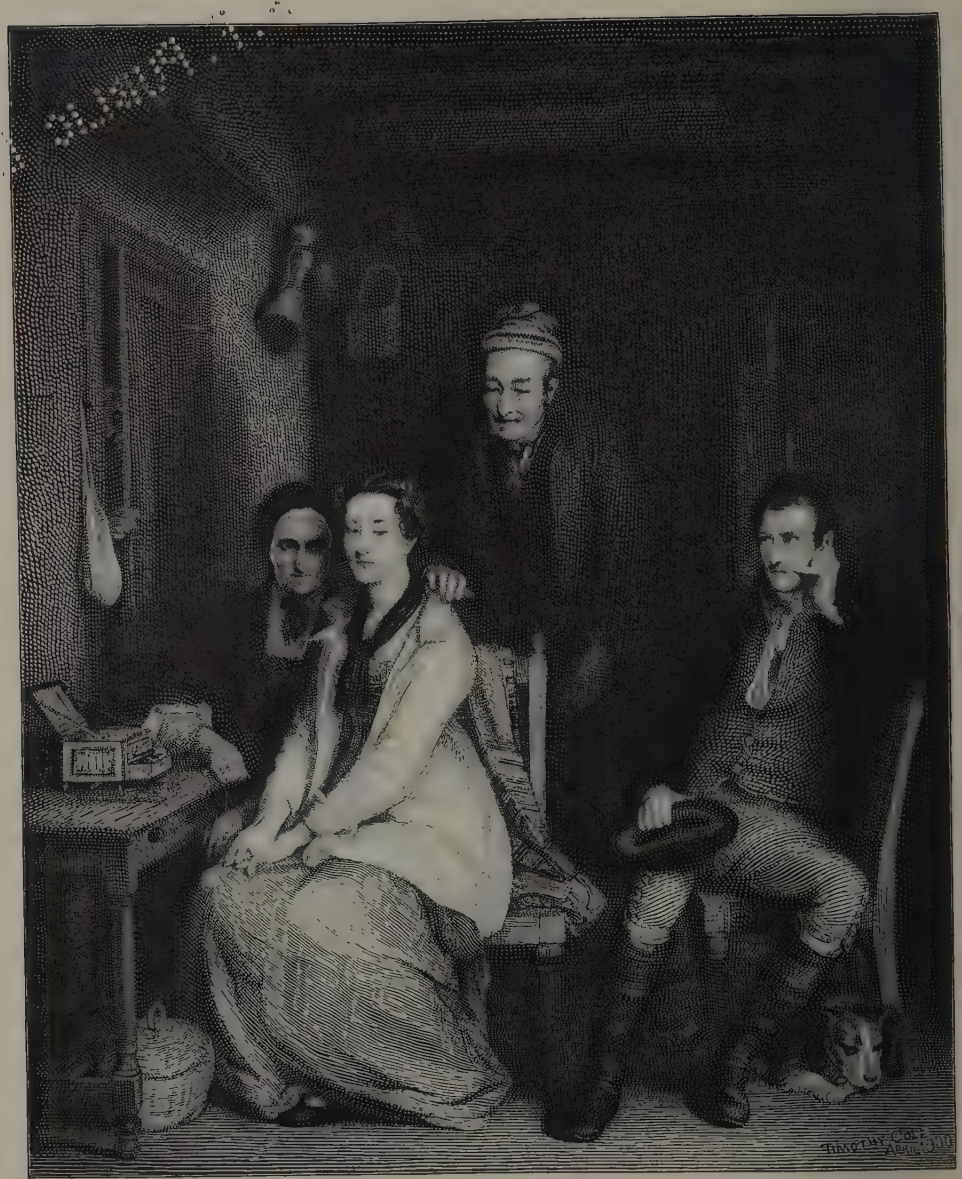
IT was a favorite remark of Wilkie's that people of taste in art "begin by admiring Dutch pictures, but end with Italian." The generalization was perhaps made up from the painter's personal experience. At forty he grew tired of the genre subject, with which he had scored many successes, and started to paint up to Titian and Velasquez. The effort, however commendable, was hardly successful. The armor of Mars did not fit the man from Fifeshire; and, what was worse, his cold-blooded, practical-minded public as much as told him so. It would not accept his larger view, but persisted in liking the "Blind Fiddler" and other earlier anecdotal canvases. Doubtless the painter would have had them forgotten; but they clung to him, and to-day he is best known as a portrayer of Scotch and English small life.

Wilkie was born in Cults, Scotland, November 18, 1785. He was the son of a minister, and, of course, an infant prodigy, drawing, as he said of himself, "before he could read, and painting before he could spell." At seven years of age he was carrying an improvised sketch-book and making pictures of beggars, peddlers, and soldiers. His first school was at Pitlessie. He afterward went to Kettle, where, for some time, he was under John Strachan, later on Bishop of Toronto. He passed through the schools with a sketch-book in hand, and is said to have had "an eye and an ear for all the idle mischief" that was brewing. At fourteen he was determined to be a painter, and the Earl of Leven's influence got him the chance to study at the Trustees' Academy of Design in Edinburgh under John Graham. He was not phenomenally successful at first, but he had perseverance and great industry, and

soon attracted attention by a scene painted from "Macbeth," and a "Callisto in the Bath of Diana," which gained him a ten-guinea prize. While at the Trustees' Academy he did some portrait and miniature work, as well as some illustrative drawings; but his bent toward the painting of genre subjects was already apparent. In 1804 he left Edinburgh and the Academy, and began painting the celebrated "Pitlessie Fair," with its one hundred and forty figures. The next year he went up to London, entered the schools of the Royal Academy, and became acquainted with Flaxman, West, Mulready, Jackson, and others.

Almost immediately after entering the Academy Wilkie began the painting of what are considered his early masterpieces. In 1806 he painted the "Village Politicians," which the Earl of Mansfield bought for some thirty pounds, and at the same time he had orders from Sir George Beaumont and Lord Mulgrave for other works. The Beaumont order was executed the same year, and proved to be the "Blind Fiddler," one of the painter's best and most characteristic works; and a second order from Lord Mulgrave, executed two years later, was the "Rent Day," another very successful genre piece. Wilkie was quite astonished at his success. Commissions poured in upon him too fast for execution, and at one time he thought he had "at least forty pictures bespoke." His friends had now become numerous. He was living in a large house in Cavendish Square, and occasionally painting portraits of people like the Marchioness of Lansdowne. In 1809 he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy, and two years later became a full academician. He now thought it worth while to give a Wilkie exhibition in Pall Mall, at which his Academy pictures, from "Pitlessie Fair" to the "Village Festival," were shown; but financially the exhibition was not a success. The "Village Festival" was seized for gallery-rent, and Wilkie had to pay thirty-two pounds to have it released. The incident is said to have resulted in his painting the well-known "Distraining for Rent," which sold for six hundred guineas to the British Institution.

"Blind Man's Buff" was Wilkie's Academy picture in 1813, and at the same time he was engaged upon the picture which Mr. Cole has engraved—"Duncan Gray, or the Refusal." In the following year he went with Haydon to Paris for a short visit. French art seemed to make little or no impression upon him, but a tour in the Netherlands with Raimbach in 1816 was more fruitful in influ-



THE REFUSAL, BY SIR DAVID WILKIE.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON.

ences. The Dutch pictures were more to his taste, and for a time Teniers and Ostade became his prophets. His subject, too, changed with his style, but in no such positive manner as after the Italian tour. Italy and the historical picture had not as yet appealed to him, but he was moving toward the historical subject in such pictures as his "Waterloo Gazette, or the Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo." This picture was exhibited in 1822, and made a great stir. In method of handling it marks a slight transition—a change from Teniers to the broader manner of Ostade.

In 1822 Wilkie went to Scotland, where the coming of George IV was the chief topic of the day. The painter soon began making studies for the "King's Entrance to Holyrood," a picture which was not completed until some years later. Other canvases, like the "Parish Beadle" and the "Highland Family," were offered for exhibition in the interim. The industry of the artist was unfailing, but work, worries, and domestic troubles finally called a halt in his labors. He was never a strong man physically, and a series of deaths in his family quite broke him down mentally. He went abroad for his health, passing through France into Italy, where he visited all the chief cities with their art treasures, then went to Germany, but finally drifted back to Rome in the winter of 1826. The following summer he was able to take up the brush again, but he painted little until he got to Madrid. There he saw Spanish art at its best, and there his style—which had been undergoing changes ever since he saw Titian at Venice—was now almost completely reversed. He had wearied of the minuteness of the little Dutchmen, and had come to look with some contempt upon their subjects. He had grown up to an admiration for the largeness of effect in Titian and the broad handling of Velasquez. But when he attempted to paint English history after the manner of these great masters, there was some incongruity. One can hardly imagine a "Preaching of John Knox" or a "Queen Victoria Presiding at her First Council" done in the style of the "Pesaro Madonna" or the "Surrender at Breda." Wilkie was not equal to the task, and a public that had always looked to him for the story in paint, the domestic tale on canvas, could see little that was interesting in his new departure. When he came home after a three years' absence and talked Spanish art, his words were taken with a grain of salt; and when, in 1829, he exhibited the "Princess Doria," the "Maid

of Saragossa," and the "Guerrilla Council of War" as specimens of his new style, criticism did not spare him. His admirers wanted more "Blind Fiddler" pictures; but Wilkie felt he was right, and would not cast aside his new garment. At the death of Lawrence he was made painter in ordinary to the king—an office which he continued to hold under William IV and Victoria; and he went on painting the historical in such canvases as the "Columbus in his Convent," the "Duke of Wellington Writing a Despatch," and the "Napoleon and the Pope in Conference at Fontainebleau."

In 1840, after exhibiting eight pictures in the Academy of that year, he again left England. He now journeyed through Holland and Germany to Constantinople and the East. He was in search of new material for historical pictures, and from his letters he had evidently found it; but it was not to employ him for long. In 1841 he started home, and on the voyage he was taken ill, and died suddenly in the morning of June 1. Owing to quarantine laws, he was buried at sea, near Gibraltar. Turner, who was much attached to him, painted a picture of the burial at night, which is now in the National Gallery, London. Wilkie's last picture was a portrait of Mehemet Ali, painted at Alexandria.

Wilkie's shifts of style may be regarded by some as infirmity of purpose, and yet apparently they marked progress. From Teniers and Ostade to Titian and Velasquez was certainly a step upward. That Wilkie was not entirely successful was due more to his cramped mental attitude than to his technical shortcomings. He had early scaled his imagination to fit the "Rent Day" and the "Village Festival," and when he tried to do "Columbus in his Convent" he seemed like "a man out of his depth," as Delacroix expressed it. He could change subjects and brushes readily enough, but he could not change his early way of looking at things. Yet his Italian manner was by no means a failure. Those who have seen his late portraits, so strong in characterization, so swift in handling, know that he had gained something by the contact with Italy. His grasp was larger, his brush was broader, and both were improvements on his smaller performances. There are those, of course, who like the little picture with its microscopical accuracy; and the more suggestive it is of the snuff-box cover the better they like it. People in Wilkie's early days marveled over his faces and costumes and textures, just as their successors of to-day hang breathless over Meissonier's boots and buttons and cocked

hats. And there is no denying skill, taste, and color sense in these pictures. Wilkie's "Boys Digging for a Rat" is remarkable in its drawing, painting, and coloring; and the "Blind Fiddler" is masterful in composition. He was a good workman, and (barring his bitumen habit, which was a common failing of the time) he could paint a picture very cleverly. His invention was ingenious, his handling facile and graceful, his coloring quite charming. But, after all, painting has to do with something more than the technician's skill. It must have, first of all, a largeness of view which Wilkie did not possess. He spent most of his artistic life looking down the small end of the opera-glass. Finally he reversed the glass, but it was dashed from his hand too soon. Perhaps his countrymen who know him only as the painter of the "Parish Beadle" and the "Refusal" do no injustice to his artistic nature. He was at heart a painter of genre, like Mulready and Leslie, though superior to either of them. It is no matter for regret that he was dissatisfied and strove for nobler things. When a painter is content with himself he is no longer progressing. Wilkie was reaching up higher when he died.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

IT would be difficult to say whether the picture of "Boys Digging for a Rat" was painted for the sake of the picturesqueness of the street and the tender atmospheric effect which it exhibits, or for the incident from which the canvas takes its name. It is half-way, as a composition, between the view of a street — or rather alley — and a figure-piece. If a blank sheet of paper be placed over the upper half of the engraving, shutting out all beyond a line, say, that would intercept the top half of the barrel above the head of the boy who is digging, it will be seen that the picture instantly gains fullness and completeness as a composition and a figure-piece. Accustom the eye to this for a few minutes, and on removing the sheet I think it will be felt that there is an unnecessary amount of space above; that the rest of the picture is deserted, and that these four boys and three dogs represent the whole of the population of the surrounding district. A Dutchman, now, would have made somebody looking out of the top window, or one or two figures or some other signs of life in the background, and would thus have connected the animation of the principal group with other, though of course lesser, signs of life. It is well known how little it takes to attract the attention of neighbors; how instantly they bob up on the slightest pretext. Yet here the artist shows an excited group of boys and dogs, that, by their ejaculations, mingled with the yelping of the mongrels, would surely attract the curiosity of others — some other youngster at least; yet we glance up and around, but lo! everything has a dim, lonely, and deserted aspect, as though there were

nobody else in the world besides this boisterous group.

This work, however, was an early one by Wilkie; in none of his other works is there noticeable this want. It has been remarked that there is a dog, sometimes two or more, in almost every single instance of the painter's earlier works; and these animals are not put in merely for effect or to fill up a blank space, but always have some part to play in the scene; which remark receives abundant confirmation in the present instance, as also in the "Refusal," where the animal beneath the chair appears quite in sympathy with the glum looks of his master.

The first named picture is a small one, perhaps four times as large as the engraving, low in tone and rich in coloring, and hangs in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

The painting by Wilkie which hangs in the South Kensington Museum, Sheepshanks's gift, under the title of the "Refusal," is an inspiration from Burns's song of Duncan Gray:

Duncan Gray cam' here to woo—
Ha, ha! the wooing o' 't,
On blythe Yule night when we were fou—
Ha, ha! the wooing o' 't!
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Looked asklent and unco skeigh [dignified],
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh [aloof]—
Ha, ha! the wooing o' 't!

There is nothing incomprehensible about the picture. It appeals, like the song, directly to the sympathies of all. The dislike and hesitancy of the young woman are expressed not only in the face, but throughout the whole person. In her antipathy she has moved to the edge of the chair, and turned away with coldness and aversion. Some think there is indecision rather than refusal shown in her gesture. The attitude of the wooer, however, speaks forcibly enough of the apparent blow he has received to his hopes. The dog beneath the chair, in his lugubrious look, repeats in a way the disappointment depicted in his master's countenance. The hand of the lover, brought so naturally and expressively to the face, tells with effect in the composition, increasing the volume of light in this spot, and thereby giving to it due bulk and importance; also observe that the little finger of this hand, following the direction of the eyes and pointing directly to the head of the object of regard, aids powerfully in connecting the two figures. Then the gentle and persuasive demeanor in the old parents is admirably shown. They evidently sympathize with the disappointment of their guest, considering —which is rare—their beautiful daughter as

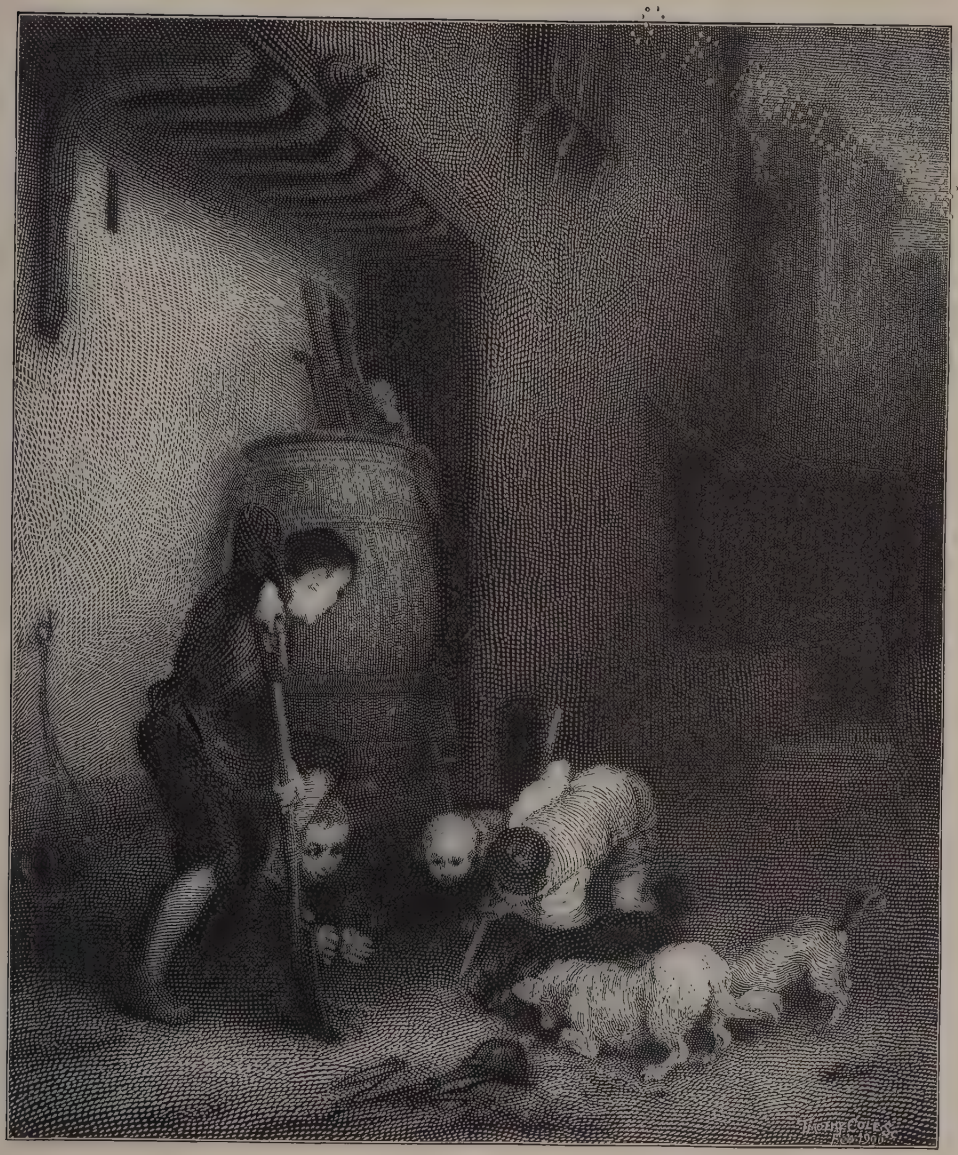
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,

though, what is more likely, they may not be unmindful that not among the least commendable qualities of the goodly swain is his sound financial standing:

For he has that they would be at,
And will commend him weel;
Since parents auld think love grows cauld
Where brains want milk and meal.

There are five individuals that figure in this scene: the two young people and the two old ones and—the one behind the door that stands ajar—the eavesdropper!

The coloring of the whole is low, rich, and warm. The interior, which shows a Scotch peasant's cottage with its low ceiling of heavy beams, is of a bituminous depth of tone, into which the warm brownish dress of the old man and black coat of the young one softly float. The latter's waistcoat is of a soft, rich red, and his breeches of a yellowish neutral hue. The delicate warm lilac tone, so very neutral, of the dress of the girl, and the mellow creamy white of her sack, relieved by the rich dark dress of the mother and



DIGGING FOR RATS, BY SIR DAVID WILKIE.

DIPLOMA GALLERY, ROYAL ACADEMY, LONDON.

the brightly colored scarf hanging over the back of the chair, is a fine, harmonious bit of color. The warm gray of the floor and the wall, where hangs the scrap-bag, and the pewter jug near the salt-box, are about the same tone, though the floor is the lighter value. The mahogany table, with its trinket-box and basket beneath, are details as beautifully executed as any by the old Dutchmen, and the atmosphere is delicately felt between these objects and those upon the wall in the background, as well as the atmospheric quality of the other room, seen through the square of the open doorway behind the head of the young man.

This canvas is as fine an instance as any of the artist's power of chiaroscuro. It was painted in the winter of 1813, and exhibited at the Royal Academy the following spring. Owing to the use of bitumen in its painting, it fell into a dilapidated state, but has been successfully restored. It is on a panel, and measures twenty-one and a half by twenty-five and three quarter inches. T. C.

CHARLES ROBERT LESLIE

CHAPTER XVII

CHARLES ROBERT LESLIE

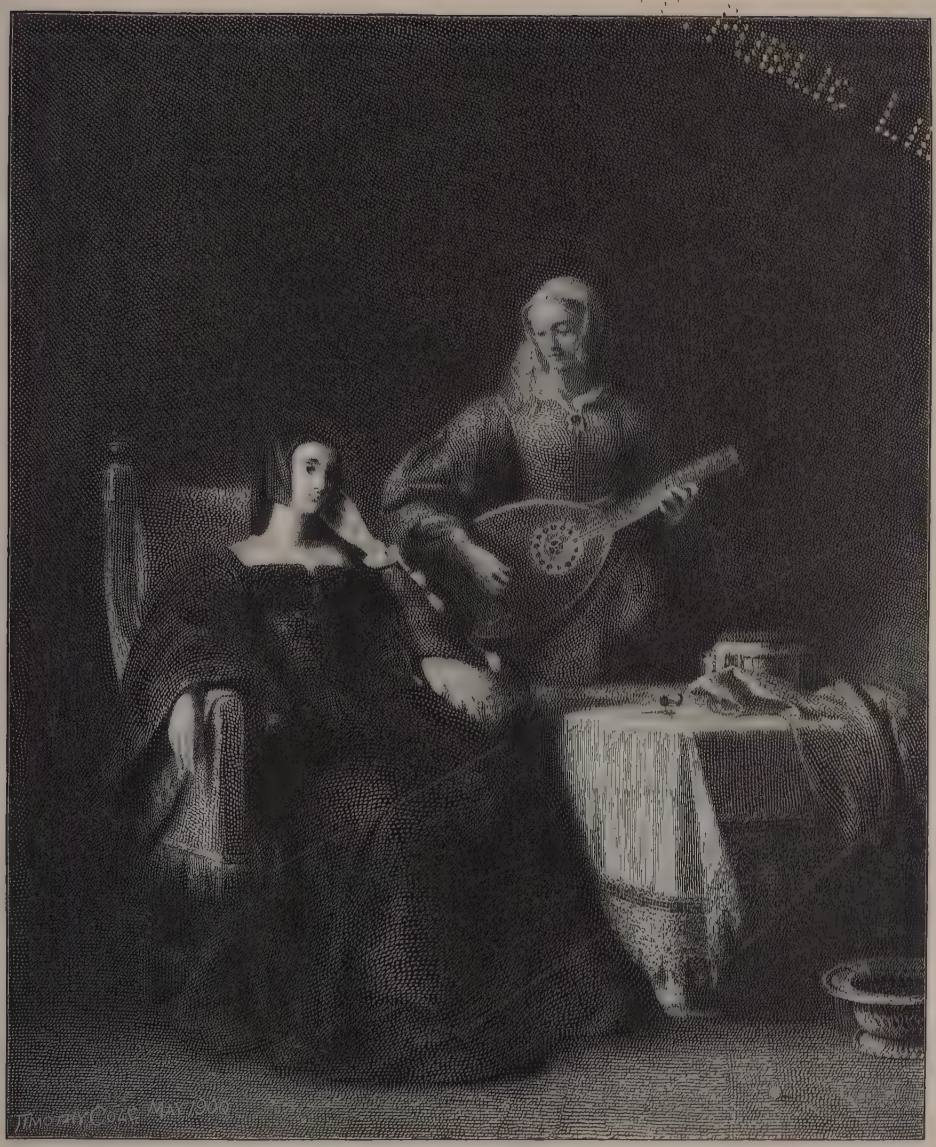
(1794–1859)

LESLIE, both as a painter and as a writer about painters, is entitled to "honorable mention" in any history of English art. He was not a "gold-medal" man,—not one of the leaders of new movements,—but he had his place in the Academy group, and was a recognized factor in the artistic and social life of his time. There are men—worthy men, too—who reflect rather than create epochs. They are not great inventors in themselves, but they profit by all that is invented, and become well versed in method, clever in exposition, representative in theme. England, like every other country, has produced men of this kind, and Leslie is perhaps not improperly classed among them.

He was born in London, October 19, 1794, but his parents were Americans who only the year before the painter's birth had come from Philadelphia. The father was a clockmaker, and had hoped to increase his business by moving to London. After half a dozen years the Leslies returned to Philadelphia, where the elder died in 1804, somewhat embarrassed financially. Through the kindness of friends Leslie received the academic education of the day, and, always fond of drawing, would have studied art, but was too poor to do so. At fourteen he was apprenticed to a publishing firm, and while an apprentice he made from memory a portrait of Cooke, the actor, which attracted the attention of one of the firm, who took it to the Exchange Coffee-House for exhibition. There the portrait so astonished the natives that a subscription was raised to enable Leslie to study art in Europe. He had had some lessons from Thomas Sully in Philadelphia, and when he reached London his letters to his fellow-townsman Benjamin West, then president of

the Royal Academy, gained him special privileges. He at once began studying in the schools of the Royal Academy, and took for a chum and fellow-student the youthful Morse, who was then studying painting, but was afterward to become famous as the inventor of the telegraph. They studied the Elgin Marbles together, and received instruction in painting from West and Washington Allston. Leslie soon made friends in literary and art circles. He met Coleridge, and became intimate with Washington Irving and John Constable. His instructors in art and his associates, naturally enough, urged him toward the production of serious art,—"historical" art, it was then called,—and it was not long before Leslie turned out a "Saul and the Witch of Endor," which was rejected at the British Gallery, and a "Timon," which was exhibited in 1813. The "Timon" was afterward rechristened "Murder," and represented "a man coming from a cave at midnight, holding a drawn sword in one hand and his breath with the other." It was not a success. The "Death of Rutland," produced a few years later, and for which the young Landseer served as a model, was better; but nothing that he did at this time was of real importance.

In 1817 Leslie was in Paris with Allston and William Collins, and while there painted some portraits of American friends; but it was not until the next year that he scored his first success and showed his true field of labor in the picture called "Sir Roger de Coverley Going to Church." It was the incident-picture which had proved so fetching in the hands of Wilkie, Mulready, and others, and which was to make Leslie well known in his day and generation. At this time he was also working in black and white, making illustrations for Irving's "Knickerbocker History of New York" and the "Sketch-Book." In 1821 he painted the "May-Day Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth," a picture which greatly pleased Scott. He afterward visited Abbotsford with Landseer, painted Sir Walter's portrait, and made some illustrations for the Waverley Novels. He had now begun painting his illustrative pictures in sequences. "Sancho Panza in the Apartment of the Duchess" (1824) was the first of the Don Quixote series, and the Sir Roger de Coverley theme was shortly added to by the celebrated "Sir Roger de Coverley among the Gipsies." These were very popular pictures, and Leslie soon found himself and his painting the town talk. He was elected a Royal Academician in 1826, painting the beautiful "Queen Catharine of Aragon and her Maid" as his diploma pic-



CATHARINE OF ARAGON AND MAID, BY C. R. LESLIE.

DIPLOMA GALLERY, ROYAL ACADEMY, LONDON.

ture, and he had been happily married to a Miss Harriet Stone the year previous; so that, all told, he had reason to congratulate himself. In the years immediately succeeding his marriage he painted "Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman," the "Dinner at Mrs. Page's House," and the "Taming of the Shrew"—pictures which have been widely circulated through engravings.

Leslie was unusually successful in London, and yet in 1833 he was induced to accept the appointment of professor of drawing in the United States Military Academy at West Point. Six months of teaching sufficed him, and he returned to England, where he once more took up the painting of the incident-picture. In 1838 he went to Windsor to paint "The Queen Receiving the Sacrament at her Coronation" and the "Christening of the Princess Royal." He afterward painted scenes from "Comus" and "The Vicar of Wakefield." His "Memoirs of John Constable" appeared in 1848, and three years later he became professor of painting in the Royal Academy. The lectures at the Academy were published under the title of "Handbook for Young Painters," and were very well received. Delicate health caused him to resign this professorship in 1852, and thereafter he confined himself to painting and writing. His latest pictures were "Hermione," "Sir Roger de Coverley in Church," "Hotspur and Lady Percy," and "Jeanie Deans and Queen Caroline." He died May 5, 1859, the day after the exhibition at the Academy had opened. His "Life of Reynolds" and his "Autobiographical Recollections" were completed and published, after his death, by Tom Taylor.

Thirty of his works were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1870. He was not a prolific painter, and his total contribution to the Academy exhibitions during his life was only seventy-odd canvases. Some of these were portraits of men and women of the time—perfunctory work usually, for he was not interested in portraiture as such. He preferred to illustrate scenes from poetry and fiction, and was really a painter of history in the little. Even in this his range was not wide. He contented himself with many replicas of such favorite works as the Sancho Panza and the Sir Roger de Coverley series. But if his output was not large in quantity or quality, it was always marked by skill and care. He was a very good draftsman, if at times over-precise and sharp, and as a painter he could handle surfaces easily and gracefully. In these days, when it is the fashion in some quarters to paint with wax or with as little

oil as possible, so as to produce a dull, tapestry-like surface, the painting of Leslie might be spoken of as wet or "slippery"; but in Leslie's day it was accounted very good work. It was acceptable painting for any day, and was invariably marked by good taste and sound judgment.

With skill, considerable humor, and a large fund of common sense to draw from, it is not surprising that he was a popular painter. He would have been welcomed in any land, at any time. It is the great genius, the leader, or the innovator who meets with public scorn, and Leslie was none of these. He was simply a rational being and an accomplished craftsman, who accepted the light of his day and made the most of it.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

THE "Queen Catharine of Aragon and her Maid" is one of the most serious of Leslie's pictures. It measures twenty by twenty-two and a half inches, and hangs in the Diploma Gallery, Burlington House, London.

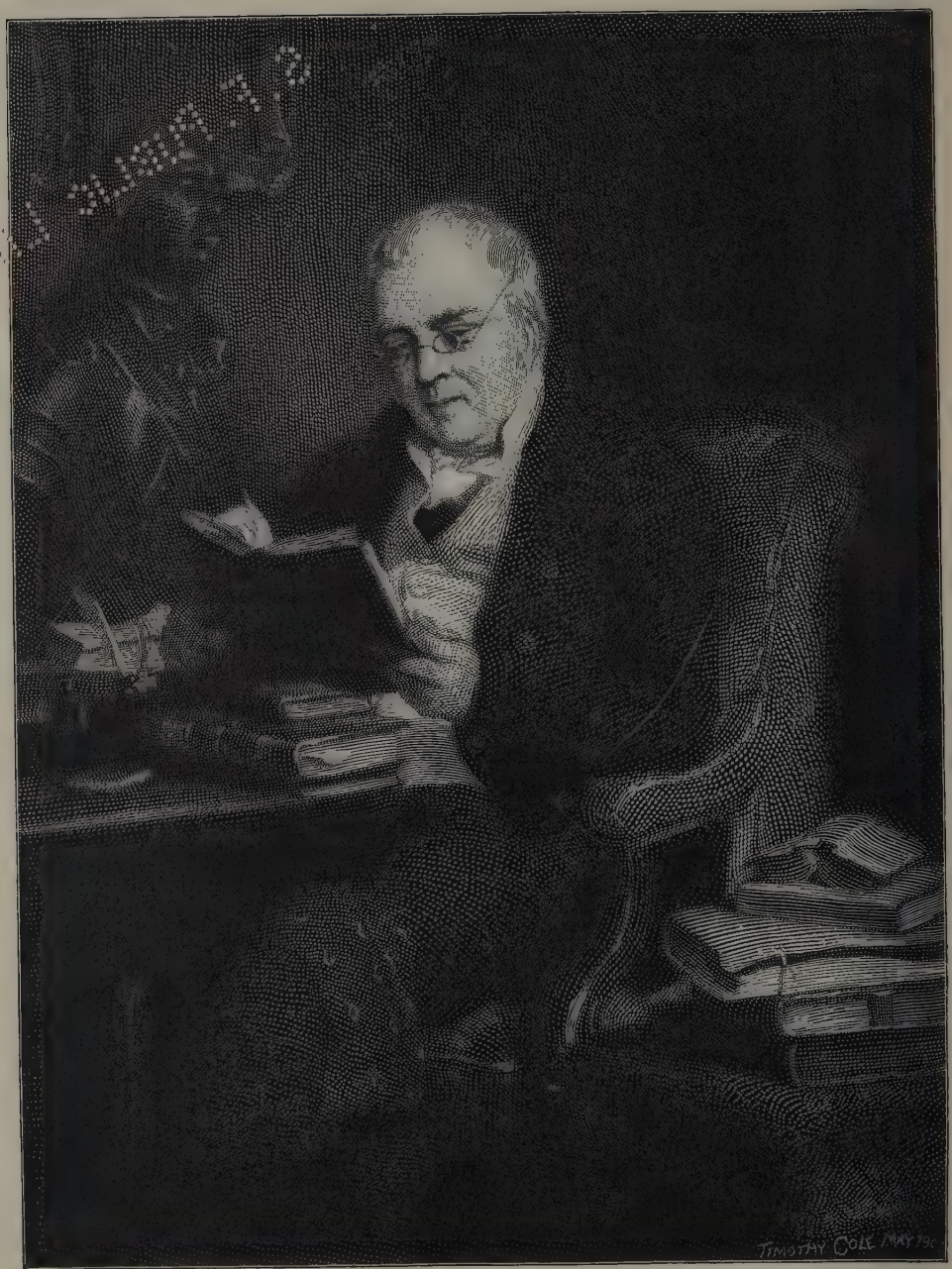
Queen Catharine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, was born in 1485 at Alcalá de Henares, Spain, and died at Kimbolton Castle, England, in 1536. She was first of the six queens of Henry VIII, to whom she was married in 1509. The picture shows the unfortunate and melancholy lady in her last days at her final place of virtual imprisonment, accompanied by her faithful friend,— at one time among her maids of honor from Spain,— Lady Willoughby, formerly Maria de Salinas, who found means to be admitted to the queen without a passport a week before her death, and who remained with her thenceforward to the end.

The queen, though of strong constitution, had little heart for outdoor sport, and preferred rather to occupy and distract her mind with needlework. She was in all respects a faithful and exemplary wife, and possessed of considerable learning. Her natural piety was nursed by misfortune from her earliest years and the neglect and shameful injustice of her husband. She died, it is said, of cancer of the heart, for on her embalming, the heart was found blackened and corroded throughout.

That she was a devoted student of the Bible Erasmus has left on record; and it is remarkable that the great scholar dedicated to her, in 1526 (just one year before the king's project of a divorce was talked about), his work on "Christian Matrimony," which it is supposed he wrote at her suggestion.

T. C.

SIR EDWIN HENRY LANDSEER



PORTRAIT OF DR. JOHN ALLEN, BY SIR EDWIN LANDSEER.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON.

CHAPTER XVIII

SIR EDWIN HENRY LANDSEER

(1802–1873)

THE most precocious and perhaps the most popular of all our old English masters was Sir Edwin Landseer—the last painter upon our list. He was acclaimed a genius long before he reached man's estate, and during the seventy years of his life he painted pictures that were circulated through engravings in all the countries of Christendom. A quarter of a century ago scarcely a house in America but had an engraving of the "Stag at Bay" hanging in the library, and every sportsman can remember when the "Monarch of the Glen" was beaten in relief upon powder-flasks and scratched on gun-locks. Several generations absorbed art and natural history at the feet of Sir Edwin, and to-day there are those who class him with Dr. John Brown as one of the few mortals who understood the nature of the animal. It is not often that an artist attains such wide-spread popularity, and usually there are reasons for it other than artistic. It was so in Landseer's case. He forced the note of animal life (especially the dog) by humanizing it, giving it emotions and sentiments pertinent to humanity, making it tell a sentimental or a funny story. And he forced the note of art by a "smart" painting of surfaces and textures which disguised a want of depth, covered up a lack of substance. Not that Landseer was always superficial, but that his popularity was gained by his least meritorious performances. It is an old story in art. Correggio is still popularly known as the painter of that sugary little "Reading Magdalene" at Dresden—a picture that he never saw; and Millet, who had a command of line worthy of Michelangelo, lives in the popular mind as the painter of the "Angelus," an exaggerated story in paint done in the artist's poorest manner.

Landseer was born in London, March 7, 1802. His father believed in no education for an artist except nature, and early took the boy into the fields to sketch donkeys and goats. Some of his drawings, done at the age of six, are now in the South Kensington Museum, and at ten he could paint and etch in a creditable manner, as his "Brown Mastiff"—which sold at Sir John Swinburne's sale in 1861 for seventy guineas—still attests. He was taking prizes in drawing when he was eleven, and at thirteen he was an exhibitor at the Royal Academy. He entered the schools of the Academy as a student in 1816, and the next year his "Sleeping Dog," at the Society of Painters in Oils and Water-Colors, created a stir. He began by painting animals, and at first dealt with them almost exclusively. Lions and tigers interested him, and the dog was his favorite theme. Haydon advised him to become the English Snyders, and to study Raphael's Cartoons and the Elgin Marbles; but Landseer had already taken his bent and was not influenced by this questionable advice. He was only a boy, but already a successful animal-painter. Every one wondered at his artistic insight; every one praised his skill.

At twenty-two he was at Abbotsford, sketching Sir Walter and his hounds. The portrait of Scott by Landseer, now in the National Portrait Gallery, is not finished like the "Dr. John Allen" which Mr. Cole has engraved, and perhaps for that reason it has a finer artistic feeling, is freer in handling and better in color. It is one of Landseer's very good things, and suggests an artistic destiny which he never entirely fulfilled. Popularity turned his brush in another direction, and the trip to Scotland changed his subject somewhat. He became fond of deer, mountains, and Scotch heather, paying less attention to lions and tigers, but always clinging to the dog. He now began painting the dog in connection with his master in such pictures as "Chevy Chase" and the "Deer-Stalker's Return"; and, after he had been made a Royal Academician in 1831, he began to burlesque his subject in such popular successes as "High Life" and "Low Life," "Jack in Office" and "Laying Down the Law"—all of them pictures of dogs, posed in imitation of humanity, as the titles suggest. All his life the dog furnished material for his art. Apparently he dressed him up and made a clown of him to please the public, and occasionally he painted his real nature as though to assure himself that he was not wandering too far afield. The "Sleeping Bloodhound"

is an illustration of the true dog, with nothing funny or sentimental about him, and it is to-day one of Sir Edwin's best pictures—a fine bulk of body and a good piece of painting.

In 1840 he went abroad for his health, and during the years following he produced "Peace and War," "Diogenes," and "Shoeing the Bay Mare" — canvases that have little to recommend them either in material or in method. The "Monarch of the Glen" was painted in 1851 for the refreshment-room of the House of Lords, but the Commons refused the price. It afterward sold for seven thousand pounds. The stag fights, called "Night" and "Morning," followed, and with these pictures Landseer virtually reached his height. He was knighted in 1850, and in 1855 he received the large gold medal at the Paris Exhibition. Ten years later he was offered the presidency of the Royal Academy, but he had suffered much from mental depression and declined the new responsibility. He never completely recovered from a nervous collapse experienced in 1860, and after that date he did only one important work, and that the modeling of the noble lions for the Nelson monument in Trafalgar Square. Death came to him October 1, 1873, and he was buried in St. Paul's with public honors. His last portrait was of the Queen; his last drawing was of a dog.

Socially Landseer was a success from the start. He knew the "best people," and early in life began painting portraits of the nobility. The Dukes of Bedford, Gordon, Athole, and Devonshire sat to him, he painted the Queen and the royal family a number of times, and he taught the Queen and Prince Albert how to etch. He also painted many children's portraits, with such titles as "Little Red Riding Hood," "Naughty Child," and the like, using almost always dogs or birds as adjuncts to the figure. After 1839 he painted some celebrated likenesses of young girls, including those of Miss Peel, Miss Egerton, and Princess Mary of Cambridge. Society called on him many times for portraits, and he executed some of uncommon excellence; yet for them he won only small applause. The public liked him best as an animal-painter, and praised his dogs, especially the hard porcelain ones like the "King Charles Spaniel" in the National Gallery, or the soft sentimental ones like the hound in the picture called "Suspense." There is little justice to the painter in such a judgment. At his best he was a good draftsman and a very facile handler of the brush. "The Shepherd's Chief Mourner" shows him to advantage, and in the

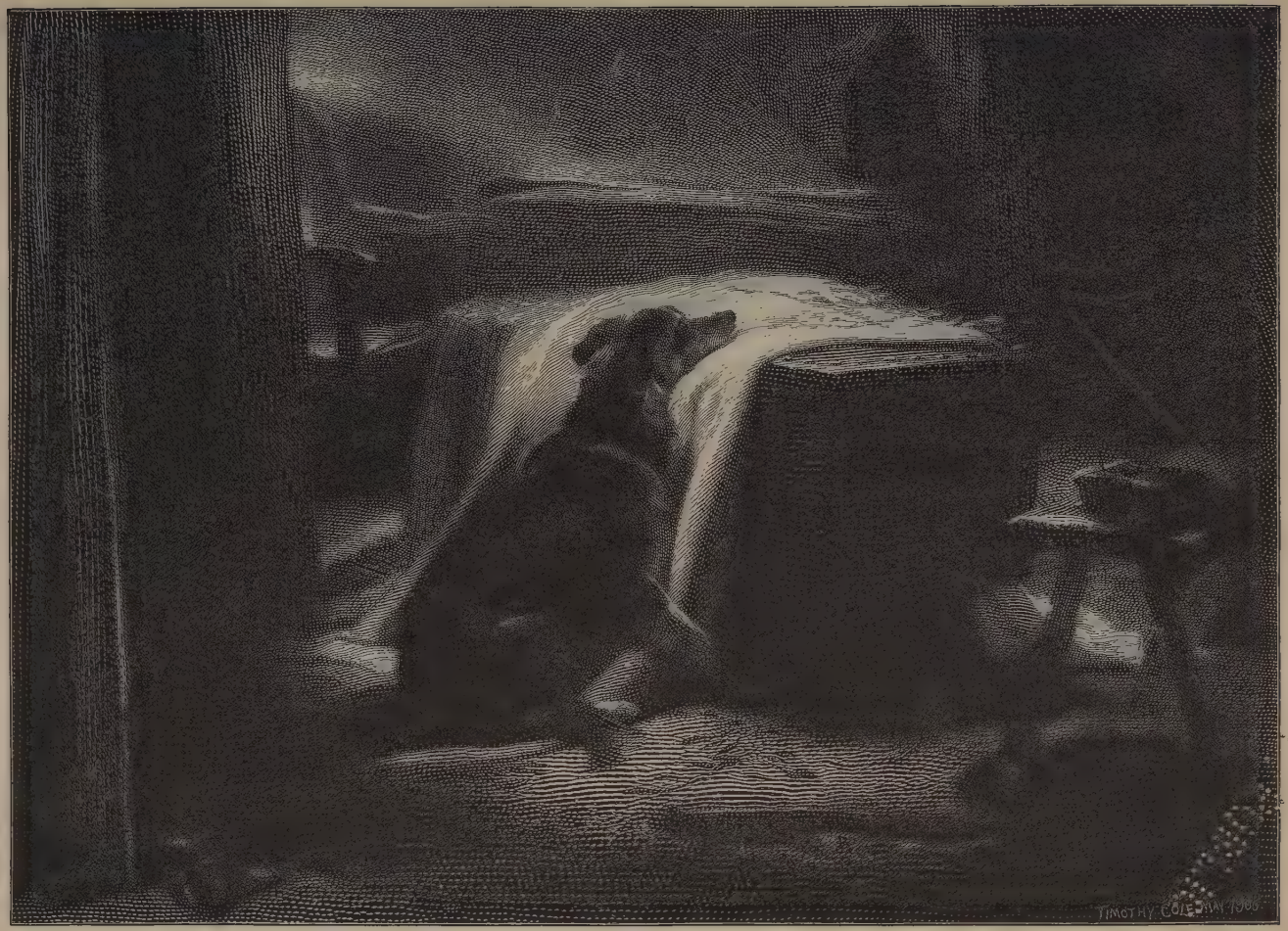
English country houses one occasionally meets with portraits by him that are exceedingly clever. His rapidity of workmanship was remarkable. The "Sleeping Bloodhound" was painted in three days, and it is recorded that he often did a picture in a day. His works suffered little by reproduction, for his color was usually cold. The sale of engravings after his pictures was something enormous. No fewer than one hundred and twenty-six engravers were employed on his works at different times. Besides engravings made from his canvases, he executed many illustrations for the Waverley Novels, for Rogers's "Italy," and for various sporting books and journals. His pencil and brush were always busy, and they brought him more than the average pecuniary reward of the artist. After his death his estate figured up over two hundred thousand pounds.

All told, Sir Edwin's career was remarkably successful, but there is a sharp line of demarcation to be drawn between his popular success and his artistic success. The latter was not slight. He had the artistic sense, but in the roar of applause that went up over the caricatured dog it was lost to sight and forgotten save by his fellow-craftsmen.

NOTES BY THE ENGRAVER

JOHN ALLEN, M.D., was a political and historical writer, and author of "An Inquiry into the Rise and Growth of the Royal Prerogative in England," published in 1830. He was born near Edinburgh in 1771, and apprenticed there to a surgeon. In 1802 he joined Lord Holland as medical friend and companion during a tour in France and Spain. From this period he became a fixed inmate of Holland House, varied only by an occasional residence at Dulwich College, of which he was warden from 1811 to 1820, and master from that year until his death, which happened in 1843, at South Street, London. The portrait is a small picture, twenty-three and a half inches high by seventeen and a half inches wide, very smooth and neat in painting and rich in coloring. The background, where a bronze bust of Cromwell is seen, is warm and deep, and blends very softly into the very dark blue coat. The pantaloons are grayer and warmer, and over the knee is thrown a reddish, spotted handkerchief of an exceedingly tender neutral tone, cast as it is in the shade. The chair is a soft tone of red leather, and the cushioned stool by it is a deeper tone of the same, while the books piled upon it are rich yet unobtrusive shades of brownish and yellowish hues. The mellow tones of the flesh blend agreeably with the grayish-white color of the waistcoat. All the tones, which are few and simple, are skilfully and harmoniously blended, and considerable brilliancy is attained in the management of the light and shade.

Everything in the picture is subdued



THE SHEPHERD'S CHIEF MOURNER, BY SIR EDWIN LANDSEER.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM, LONDON.

and pleasant to look at, as though the artist had been solicitous that nothing should disturb the sentiment of peace and comfortable study that is so successfully depicted. It is an inquiry into the rise and growth of the royal prerogative in England that we see progressing, whose charmed spell not even the regicide Cromwell, bristling in armor, is potent to disturb, but whose turbulent presentment, on the contrary, serves but to accentuate the air of tranquillity that reigns in this peaceful and substantial kingdom of books.

The portrait was painted for Lady Holland, and was presented to the National Portrait Gallery in 1873 by the widow of General Fox.

"The Shepherd's Chief Mourner" is one of the truest and most touching of pictures from the sentiment of pathos which it embodies, and which goes directly to the heart. It speaks a language that is clear to every one,— that of love and fidelity,— and Landseer utters it with true eloquence. Here is shown the dismal interior, the empty chair beside the bed, the stool with the Bible and spectacles upon it, with near by — on the floor — the cap and staff of the shepherd. But that which, of course, rivets the attention to the exclusion of all else is the coffin and the faithful dog, alone, in the stillness of the gloom, with the light sifting gently through a small window and falling directly upon the white pall that covers the dead and that relieves the head of the mourner. One can easily imagine that the artist, with equal truth and propriety, might have shown the dog howling; but then, how much more moving is the present attitude, which expresses the idea of a subdued grief too deep for utterance or for tears.

> Nor wild nor loud is his burst of woe,
> But the tide of anguish is far below.

We can linger long before this picture, musing upon the living and suffering animal. It points at once to nature and to nature's God. It not only suggests prayer, but it *is* prayer, and doubtless is heard by Him who is not unmindful even of the fall of a sparrow:

> Who gave that love sublime,
> And gave that strength of feeling great
> Above all human estimate.

The picture, measuring eighteen by twenty-four inches, was painted in 1837, when the artist was thirty-five years old, and by it he achieved a success of the most worthy and enduring kind. It hangs in the South Kensington Museum of London, in the collection known as the Sheepshanks Gift. T. C.